



PRIMROSES

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PRIMROSES

Quarterly of the
American Primrose Society

Summer, 1991
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ON THE COVER:

One of the early summer primroses, *Primula helodoxa*, now known as *P. prolifera*, is seen here in the Skupens' garden.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS:

Cover photo and p. 29 by Cy Happy. National and Tacoma shows, photos by Louise Fenili, Oregon show and p. 32-34 photos by Jay Lunn. Photos p. 23 by Jennifer Lort.

Line drawing on page 15 and in symposium notice on back cover by Doretta Klaber.

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Summer 1991 / American Primrose Society

AMERICAN PRIMROSE SOCIETY

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING

The Board of the American Primrose Society met on April 13, 1991 at the South Center Pavilion, in conjunction with the National Show. Minutes and Treasurer's Report were presented. Other business included the following topics.

Update on the Conference

Greg Becker, Conference Chairman, was unable to attend but sent a report. Planning is on schedule. A registration form will be sent to all American Primrose Society members with the summer issue of the Quarterly.

New Editor

Maedythe Martin of Victoria, B.C. is the new editor of the Quarterly. She reported that the Quarterly is behind schedule and she will try to get the Spring issue out in late May. Every effort will be made to get the Summer issue, due in July, out on time. Please send articles and information to her at the address listed inside the back cover. Anyone willing to help as Advertising Manager, also contact the editor.

Seed Exchange

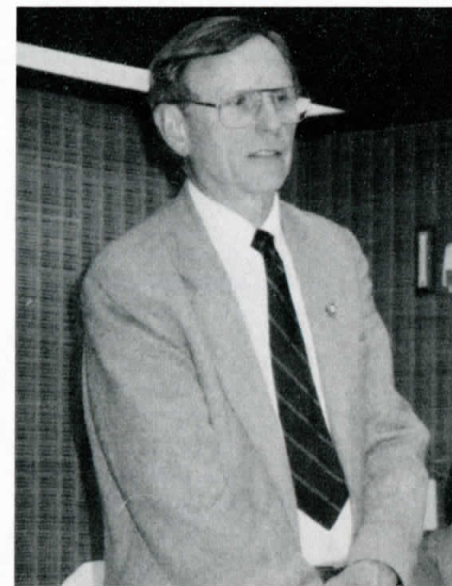
The following motions concerning the Seed Exchange were approved:

- * Donors must submit seed to the Chairman no later than October 31, 1991
- * Seed list will be mailed to members no later than December 10, 1991
- * Only primulas will be included in the seed list.

Slate of Officers

Seventy-five ballots were received for the annual meeting. The vote was unanimous for the slate of officers presented. The Board wishes to thank all the members who included comments on their ballots, many of which contained positive comments concerning the American Primrose Society. A formal vote at the Annual Meeting, held in conjunction with the

American Primrose Society / Summer 1991



Cy Happy, incoming President and Guest of Honor, speaking at the banquet.

banquet, confirmed the slate of officers for 1991/1992.

Summer Picnic and Board Meeting

The American Primrose Society picnic will be held on July 13, 1991 at Herb Dickson's home in Chehalis, Washington. We will need a new host for the picnic the following year.

Banquet

Cy Happy, the incoming President and guest of honor at the National Show and Banquet for 1991, spoke after dinner. He was introduced by June Skidmore. Cy thanked Flip Fenili and Larry Bailey for their hard work over the last year. There have been some difficult times, and it was only through the dedication of members such as these that the Society is able to continue. It has been over thirty years since Cy found himself in the President's chair, and he reminisced about some of the things that have changed in the Society over this time.

American Primrose Society Show Report: National Show

South Center Pavilion, April 13 & 14, 1991

Hosted by the Washington Chapter

Show Chairman, Thea Oakley

Guest of Honor: Cyrus Happy III



Outgoing President Flip Fenili and Secretary Ann Lunn at the National Show.

The cold weather seems to have taken its toll as exhibits were fewer than expected. There were 12 exhibitors at the show. Plant highlights included a striking Garryard X oxlip by Peter Atkinson with tall sturdy red stems, pale yellow flat flowers and great vigor – a very handsome plant. Selected from his own seedlings, this plant, called ‘Celebration,’ won best hybrid in the Washington State show in 1987 and best polyanthus at Tacoma in 1991. Another hybrid of interest was a brown double auricula shown by Rosetta Jones. Raised from her own seed, the flower is an attractive antique auricula color, with very full, formal camellia-shaped flowers.

A third hybrid of some note was a clear red garden auricula seedling staged by Herb Dickson. Herb has been working on producing a clear red color in the garden auriculas, and both the color and form of this seedling were very good.

The old green acaulis, shown by John Kerridge, was indeed an oddity, with petal tissue a pale green when fully open. There is a color plate of this plant in Barbara Shaw’s book, **The Book of Primroses**, page 23. The named gold-laced polyanthus from England, ‘Gold Nugget,’ which won a trophy for Maedythe Martin, is a division from a plant imported from England by John Kerridge.

Two displays added interest to the show. One by the Society encouraged new members with complimentary copies of old Quarterlies. The second presented some excellent photographs of a wide variety of primulas not often seen at the shows, taken by June and the late Brian Skidmore.

A plant sale table was the other drawing card. A good selection of primula and other plants were available to members and show visitors alike.

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Trophy table at the National Show.

Trophies

Bamford Trophy: Best Show Auricula Seedling

Herb Dickson: Red show auricula seedling

Frank Michaud Trophy: Best Named Show Auricula

Herb Dickson: Red self

John Shuman Trophy: Best Alpine Auricula

Herb Dickson: Red/burgundy seedling

John Haddock Trophy: Best Seedling Alpine Auricula

Herb Dickson: Red/burgundy seedling

C. F. Hill Trophy: Best Alpine Seedling

Herb Dickson: Red/burgundy seedling

Ivanel Agee Trophy: Best Juliae Hybrid

Don Keefe: Yellow

Captain Hawkes Trophy: Best Gold-Laced Polyanthus

Maedythe Martin: ‘Gold Nugget’

Raye Berry Trophy: Best Species

Darlene Heller:

Ellen Page Haydon Trophy: Best Double Auricula

Rosetta Jones: Brown double seedling



Exhibit tables at the South Centre Pavilion.

American Primrose Society / Summer 1991

Primroses in Spring, a Primrose Show

**Totem Lake Mall, April 19
& 20, 1991**

**Presented by Eastside Primula Society and
Hilltoppers Garden Club
Show Chairman, Thea Oakley**

Beautiful primulas, some large plants with many flowers, appeared at the show this year. Along with the competition classes, there was a special horticultural display put on by the Hilltoppers Garden Club. This display contributed to the size of the show, and provided additional color and interest.

Plant sale tables were well attended by the public. Cowichans sold very well.

Two unusual and eye-catching primulas won awards: a green flowered polyanthus brought by Sally Cadranell, and a white and green Gally Gaskin, shown by Mary Baxter. Sally has had the green polyanthus for many years, and can't remember where it came from. Congratulations for maintaining it in cultivation, Sally. Mary's Gallygaskin is another old fashioned primrose. The name Gallygaskin relates to the large, striped calyx. It is a treat to be able to see these unusual flowers that often we only read about.

Awards

Sweepstakes (most points in show)

Darlene Heller

Best Plant in Show

Mary Baxter:

Best Vulgaris (Acaulis)

Sally Cadranell: Pink acaulis

Best Polyanthus

Mary Baxter: Brown polyanthus with yellow eye

Best Acaulis/Polyanthus

Florence Tibbatts: Lemon yellow acaulis/polyanthus

Best Jack-in-the-Green

Don Keefe: Wine Red Jack-in-the-Green

Best Juliana Hybrid

Mary Baxter: *Primula X juliana* 'Dorothy'

Best Double Vernales

Peter Atkinson: Bright yellow double acaulis

Best Garden Auricula

Darlene Heller: Lavender pink garden auricula

Best Double Auricula

June Skidmore: Deep purple double auricula

SPECIES

Best Species

Darlene Heller: *Primula X pubescens*, cream, ruffled

Best Asian Species

Darlene Heller: *Primula chionantha*, lavender form

Best European Species

Mary Baxter: *Primula veris*

Best Not Hardy Species

Thea Oakley: *Primula malacoides*, pale pink

Best Seedling

Darlene Heller: *Primula denticulata*, white form

EXHIBITION PLANTS

Section A: Best Show Auricula

No award

Section B: Best Alpine Auricula

No award

Section C: Best Seedling Auricula

No award

Section D: Best Laced Polyanthus

No award

Section E: Best Seedling Laced Polyanthus

Don Keefe: Dark red ground seedling

Best Rarities

Sally Cadranell: Green flowered polyanthus

Best Oddities

Mary Baxter: White and green Gallygaskin

Best Junior

No award

Best Novice

No award

Best Grower's Exhibits

Thea Oakley: *Primula malacoides*, purple form

Best Primulaceae

Thea Oakley: Dodecatheon

Best Decorative

Dene Henderson: Design, white chrysanthemums, daffodils, brown branch

Best Companion Plants

Darlene Heller: Phlox, creeping pink form

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A Synoptic Guide to the Genus Primula

by G. K. Fenderson

This book is intended to serve as a basic reference to the genus *Primula*. Approximately 1375 species, synonyms, and hybrids are included, each with complete reference to author, initial publication, and current status; for nonhybrid taxa, details of typification are also given. Distribution, habitat, altitude, section, a cultural code, stature, and color are indicated for all currently accepted species. The several dozen species described since 1949 are included within this conspectus.

Chapters are devoted to the taxonomic history of the genus, its origins, and distribution. Other chapters treat cultivation of particular species or groups, growing primulas from seed, and pests and diseases.

ISBN 0-935868-24-0. v. + 213 pp. 7" x 10" hardbound with dustjacket; 56 line drawings, 1 black and white photograph.

Available in North America from the author at P.O. Box 571, South Acworth, New Hampshire 03607 (\$40.00 postpaid). Available outside the USA from Wheldon & Wesley, Codicote, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 8TE and from the Royal Horticultural Society.

Tacoma Primrose Show

— Primroses — Our 41st Show

Lakewood Mall, April 6 & 7, 1991

Presented by the Tacoma Chapter, American Primrose Society
 Show Committee: Shirley and Gordon Lyburn, Louise and Flip Fenili



Judging at the Tacoma show

In spite of a cold winter and almost two weeks of solid rain prior to show time, the Tacoma Chapter managed to bench 150 plants from 12 growers. The many acaulis/polyanthus and species entries compensated for the poor showing of vulgaris, exhibition plants and growers exhibits. Thirteen floral arrangements in the Decorative Division were a pleasant and welcome surprise. Twenty-three plants occupied places of honor at the trophy tables.

Our configuration of show tables was different this year. The white-skirted tables were arranged with one rectangular table between two round tables. These sets of three continued down the Mall's main corridor, and were very eye-catching.

Plant sales were brisk, particularly on Saturday, at the ten sale tables. Chapter members manned the education table across from the sales area. Simple display plants, literature and library texts on primula were available to the general public. Master gardeners were available to answer questions at an adjacent table.

Two displays attracted attention. Mt. Tahoma Nursery displayed various concrete troughs planted with Irish moss, saxifrage, small conifers, cypress and trillium. The Pacific Rhododendron Society constructed a garden of full size and miniature rhododendrons in a wide range of colors. A three-tiered fountain surrounded by driftwood and small ceramic woodland animals formed the center of the display.

A number of plants deserve a mention. *Primula elatior ssp. ruprechtii*, winning the Best European Species, is a dwarf alpine form of the well known oxslip. Flip Fenili's entry was impressive in the size of the well established plant. A pale yellow hose-in-hose originating from hybridizer Peter Atkinson won in the class. Rosetta Jones obtained the Best Double Auricula Seedling award for a copper colored plant from her own hybridizing program. The sturdy upright form characteristic of all Rosetta's doubles could be seen in this handsome plant. Well done, all those who exhibited.



Copper kettle from England, the trophy for Best Auricula, not awarded this year.

Awards

Sweepstakes (Most Points in Show): Ryan Trophy: Thea Oakley

Best Plant in Show

Flip Fenili: *Primula X juliana* 'Wanda'

Most Willing Worker 'Wee Willie' Trophy
 Louise Fenili

Best Vulgaris (Acaulis): Ernest Winter Trophy
 Thea Oakley: Maroon acaulis with yellow centre

Best Polyanthus: Washington Hardware Trophy

Peter Atkinson: 'Celebration,' yellow Garryard X oxslip

Best Acaulis/Polyanthus

Thea Oakley: Red acaulis/polyanthus

Best Juliae Hybrid

Flip Fenili: *Primula X juliana* 'Wanda'

Best Hose-in-Hose

Peter Atkinson: Pale yellow hose-in-hose

Best Jack-in-the-Green: Floyd Keller Trophy

Peter Atkinson: Pale lavender Jack-in-the-Green

Best Hybridizing

Mt. Tahoma Nursery (Rick Lupp): *Primula villosa X rubra*

Best Garden Auricula

Herb Dickson: Lavender fringed garden auricula

Best Double Auricula

Rosetta Jones: Green/gold double auricula

Best Double Auricula Seedling

Rosetta Jones: Brown double auricula seedling

SPECIES

Best Asian Species

Darlene Heller: *Primula denticulata*, white form

Best European Species

Flip Fenili: *Primula elatior ssp. ruprechtii*

Best Not Hardy Species

Thea Oakley: *Primula malacoides*, pale pink

EXHIBITION PLANTS

Best Show Auricula

No award

Best Alpine Auricula

No award

Best Laced Polyanthus

No award

Best Seedling Laced Polyanthus

Peter Atkinson: Kerridge strain, deep red, small flowered

Best Rarities

Mt. Tahoma Nursery (Rick Lupp): *Primula allionii*

Best Oddities

No award



Rick Lupp's hybrid *Primula villosa x rubra* which won Best in Class for hybridizing at the Tacoma show.

Best Junior
No award

Best Novice
No award

Best Grower's Exhibits
Thea Oakley: *Primula malacoides*, purple form

Best Primulaceae
Mt. Tahoma Nursery (Rick Lupp) *Primula cortusa matthiola v. yezoensis*

Best Decorative
Section A, Class 1 Novice
Jewel Doering: Design, orange primroses, feathers, woven witch hazed wreath in small ceramic container

Section B, Class 3 Advanced Amateur
Thea Oakley: Alpine design, miniature plants in oval terracotta planter

Best Companion Plants
Herb Dickson: *Lewisia cotyledon*, magenta form



Exhibit tables at the Tacoma show

NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY — *Southern Section*

Invites all Auricula and Primula Lovers to join in this Old Society
Membership includes Yearbook

Lawrence E. Wigley
67 Warnham Court Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, England

NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY — *Midland Section*

Invites all Auricula and Primula Lovers to join in this Old Society
Membership includes Yearbook

Hon. Sec., Mr. P. Green
Primrose Hill, Bell's Bank, Buckley, Worcs., England

Oregon Primrose Society 32nd Annual Spring Show Milwaukie Community Club, Milwaukie Oregon

Presented by Oregon Primrose Society, April 20 & 21, 1991
Show Chairman, Etha Tate



The display of items with primrose designs, put together by Etha Tate for the Oregon show

This year the show was small but the variety of plants was good. In addition to the exhibits, there were educational displays, and extra copies of the Quarterlies were distributed. A display of pictures, plates, cups and saucers, all depicting primroses drew a lot of interest.

Very good plants were available at the sale table.

Awards

Sweepstakes (Most Points in Show)
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery

Best Plant in Show
Jay and Ann Lunn: *Primula sieboldii*

Best Polyanthus
Helen Moehnke: Yellow with red stems

Best Double Vernaes
Helen Moehnke: Orange double polyanthus

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Best Gold Laced Polyanthus
No award

Best Hose-in-Hose
Etha Tate: *Primula veris* Hose-in-Hose

Best Vulgaris (Acaulis)
Helen Moehnke: Yellow semi-double

Best Juliae Hybrid
Etha Tate: *Primula X juliana* unnamed, stalked, rose

Best Novice
No award

Best Garden Auricula
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery
Lavender auricula, white eye

Best Alpine Auricula
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery
'Argus'

Best Double Auricula
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery:
Yellow-green double

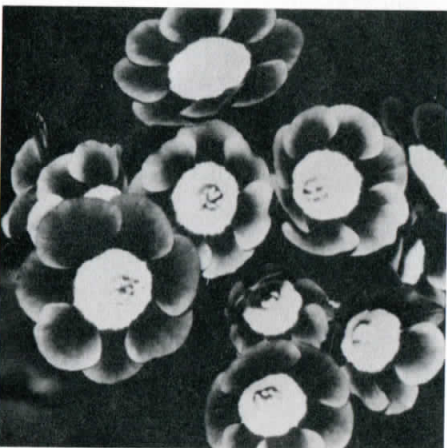
Best Show Auricula
No award

Best Species
Jay and Ann Lunn: *Primula sieboldii*

Best Species Hybrid
Jay and Ann Lunn: *Primula marginata* X 'Linda Pope'

Best Seedling
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery:
Yellow garden auricula

Best Seedling Polyanthus
No award



Best alpine auricula



Best double auricula



Best double vernaes

Best Greenhouse Primula
No award

Best Hybridizing
No award

Best Junior
No award

Best Decorative
Etha Tate

Best Oddities
Herb Dickson, Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery:
Brown garden auricula with yellow eye

Best Rarities
No award

Best Grower's Exhibits
No award



Update on 'Primula Worldwide,' the 1992 International Primula Symposium

by Greg Becker, Symposium Chairman

Enclosed in **Primroses** this month is your information brochure and registration form for 'Primula Worldwide,' the international primula symposium to be held in Portland next April. Once you've had a chance to read it, you'll see what an exciting meeting has been planned.

There are keynote speakers from the United States, England and Japan, as well as from the United States and Canada. Garden tours, and down to earth workshops are featured. Add to this the beautiful accommodations at the Greenwood Inn, plant sales, book sales, a plant show, exhibits, souvenirs, spring in the Northwest and hundreds of fellow primula enthusiasts, and you'll say, "I've died and gone to heaven" — primula heaven, of course. Now, all we need is you!

But one warning — register early! We know the workshops and tours will sell out fast. In September this registration brochure will be sent to societies, botanical gardens, and gardening clubs world wide. As an American Primrose Society member, you are getting the first chance at registration; but all registrations will be accepted on a first come, first come, first served basis and we don't want to disappoint you.

So, please read over the registration brochure, make your selections, and send your registration in as soon as possible. We want to see and meet all of you in Portland. Come share with us an exciting and memorable weekend. It will be one you'll never forget.

Don't miss it!

**Primula Worldwide
Portland, Oregon
April 10 to 12, 1992**

For further information contact:

Ann Lunn
Registrar
6620 NW 271st Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Greg Becker
Symposium Chairman
P.O. Box 3723
Eureka, CA 95502





Primula Notes

by Don Keefe

Cowichan Mutation

Several weeks ago, while wandering through our garden with Dorothy Springer, I divided a large blue Cowichan plant and gave her a clump with several crowns. Dorothy looked at it and handed it back to me saying something like "Are you sure you want to give this to me?"

Scrutinizing it closely, I found that one crown had an unusual light blue/violet flower, perhaps the beginning of a new Cowichan variety? I now examine the division almost daily, hoping it will multiply rapidly. Naturally, Dorothy will get the first extra crown!

Miniature Denticulata

While thumbing through Mary A. Robinsons' very choice new book **Primulas - the Complete Guide** I came across an article about *Primula drummondiana*, a miniature denticulata, only two to three inches tall. Mary says that the plant is attractive when grown in a pan. It's only in a private collection at the present time, but hopefully seed will be available eventually.

Choice Companion Plants for Primulas

The bees must have been playing match-maker in our garden last year between *Pulmonaria longifolia* and *Pulmonaria saccharata* var. 'Roy Davidson.' A very attractive new plant, growing vigorously under a large cedar tree, has leaves that resemble *P. longifolia* but are about three times as wide. This new hybrid has striking medium-dark leaves conspicuously splashed with white. The constant sky-blue flowers are like those on the larger leaved named variety 'Roy Davidson.'

Sturdy White Plant Markers

The white plastic knives provided by the fast-serve restaurant chains make good plant labels, and can be used four times (both sides, blade end and handle). The handles of the plastic forks and spoons can also be used for markings, but are not as satisfactory.

Here's another way to make use of a disposable product before you toss it in the bin.

Articles for Quarterly, Chapter News

It would help our Editor a great deal if APS Chapters will designate a representative to mail to her copies of newsletters, notices of primula shows, garden tours, picnics, and any other news of interest to all APS members. (*The Editor wishes to thank those Chapters that have already done this.*) Also, if any of you would care to submit articles on primulas to the Editor for publication in the APS Quarterly, it would be gratefully appreciated.

Juliana Primroses

There are several varieties of Juliana hybrids that I have read about recently. Some are new, some not so new. One strain is called 'Princess.' Valerie Woolley, a friend in Tollerton, Nottinghamshire, England and fellow APS member, says that she acquired a dozen of these lovely plants from near Gresham. She is going to try and harden them up, grow them on, and perhaps use them for some crosses. Valerie describes them as lovely compact plants in a gorgeous range of colors. Some are brick reds, some deep blues. There are whites, apricots, pale pinks and yellows. They sound wonderful! Many have a ring of deep pinkish-red pigmentation around the eye. I wonder if Sakata seed are involved? Valerie is trying to discover their origin.

The DiGiorgi Seed Company of Omaha, Nebraska sells a Sakata Julian Hybrid seed mix. They are described as having extra dwarf blooms, are tolerant to cold, and have a wide color range: pink, salmon, yellow, red and white. As I recall, there are supposed to be seven seeds to a packet

that sells for \$2.25. Actually I counted an average of 10 seed per packet. This is a useful source, for Sakata is only wholesale, and will not respond to requests for seeds from individuals.

The Wisley handbook, **Primroses and Auriculas**, written by Brenda Hyatt, describes two very small primulas, the Asteroid Strain and the Juliet Mixture. The label on the Asteroid packet describes it as:

"one of the loveliest cultivated primroses there is. It is an early small-flowered strain of mainly red, rose and pink shades and lilac. It is very free flowering and of good dwarf compact growth."

As it is only 4 inches tall I assume that it has *Primula juliae* blood. Bill Mason, also a friend and APS member, who lives in Chiswick, England, kindly sent us some of this seed. We have already planted the seedlings out in the garden. They were easy to grow and seem to be sturdy plants. They are coming along nicely and would do even better if we would get some sunshine.

There is another variety of *Primula juliae* hybrids: the Benary strain from Germany, I believe. They are called 'Valentine' and are described as:

"dainty flowers above cute leaves all the growing of this very pretty little pot plant which may be combined harmoni-

Primula Worldwide

April 10-12, 1992 –
Beaverton, Oregon

Expert speakers are confirmed for the international symposium to be held next April. You may not be familiar with all those presenting information in the formal presentations and the workshops, so further biographical information is included here.

Workshop Leaders:

Frank Cabot, is well known in rock and alpine gardening circles. A horticultural enthusiast for many years, his interests have focussed primarily on perennials, including alpine and woodland plants. Recently, they have also turned to the design and making of gardens. He gardens

ously with other flowers. The mixture contains white, yellow, pink, red, blue, lilac and violet."

Well, you get the idea! The seeds are sold by the Far North Gardens of Livonia, Michigan. (The address is 15621 Auburndale Avenue, Livonia, Michigan 48154). A packet of 30 seed sell for \$3.00 or two for \$5.40.

After an early spring with exquisite rainbow colors from two other delightful juliana strains, the delightful 'Wanda' julianas and the 'Berg Fruhling' F-1 juliana hybrids, disaster struck. The slashing torrents of rain that hit our garden like water from a collapsed dam created absolute havoc. I would estimate that over half of my seedling from these two strains have drowned or died from root rot caused by the flooded primula beds. John Kerridge in Vancouver has the same problem. Ah, well, there's always next year.

There has been some confusion about the use of the name 'Wanda' in the last few years. Some gardeners are confusing the juliana hybrid strain called 'Wanda' with the purple flowered cushion juliana named 'Wanda' that has grown with wild abandon in our gardens for years. Unfortunately that the new European strain with its many bright colors was called by the same name as the old juliana hybrid.

in Cold Spring, New York and La Malbaie in Quebec. His years of gardening experience allow him to speak with authority and insight on placing primula among other plants in a garden setting.

Randall Burr set up a tissue culture lab in Skagit County in 1977. He moved to this area to be near Dr. Wilbur Anderson and to learn from him the production of woody plants, lily bulbs. He has also studied with Dr. Marshige at the University of California, Riverside. Now with partners Bill and Bonnie Brown, he has established a plant tissue culture lab with a wide product line. No one better to tell us about the potential for primula tissue culture propagation.

Will Simmons, California Specialist at the Berry Botanic Garden, one of the Co-sponsoring groups of the Symposium, will teach you how to begin with primulas, and provide cultural information and growing requirements.

Mary's Gold

The Sakata Julian Hybrida, 'Mary's Gold' stopped blooming a few weeks ago (late May). This the first time that it has been out of bloom for a long, long time. I suspect that it is the poor weather we have been having. Rain, rain, rain, and clouds, clouds, clouds.

Sakata Primula Hybrids

It's over ten years, maybe fourteen by now, that I have been admiring Sakata primroses. These plants must be *Primula juliae* hybrids, because of their size, and creeping root stalk. But what were the original parents? Were the crosses made in Europe or Japan? The commercial seed source in the early 1970's was certainly Europe, but did Sakata purchase seed and take it to Japan to hybridize? Or did they contract with hybridizers in Europe? This remains a mystery.

No matter how it happened, and perhaps we will get some answers at the "Primula Worldwide" conference next spring in Portland Oregon, you have to recognize the major achievement made by Sakata. These plants are continuous bloomers, and despite the early strains developed for greenhouse culture, there are a few that are as hardy as the hybrids raised in Europe in the early decades of the century. To my eye, they have much clearer colors.

Letters from Bill Mason

Since July of 1990 I have been corresponding with another primula enthusiast in England, Bill Mason. Bill and his wife Clarice live in Chiswick, London and grow a great number of primula. A lot of the plants are raised from seed, some of it from his own hybridization work. Here are some comments from his letters.

"... I live about one minute from the river Thames, five minutes from Kew Gardens, a shortish bus ride from Hampton Court, midway between Datchet and Brompton and not far from the Royal Horticultural Halls

... You say you have not had Primula allergy or itch — you are lucky. It's pretty prevalent here. The itch after handling primulas is followed by redness and swelling, then hardening

of the skin which eventually cracks with deep splits occurring, particularly on the finger joints. A current treatment is Betnovate ointment. However, as I already told you, I have my own hot water treatment: soaking my hands and arms in water as hot as I can bear and for as long as possible. Then I wash off in the same water. Whenever the signs come on I do this at once. It certainly does the trick for me

... I have grown quite a lot of Barnhaven [seed] this year (1990) and have about 24 trays of their Julianas, Harbour Lights, Elizabethan Mix, double primrose, garden auriculas, and *Primula sieboldii* (Sakarusoh). They are all looking very healthy....

... I do a bit of hybridizing in the hope of breeding something good. From double auricula seed sown last winter one plant, and one plant only, has flowered so far. It looks good, a yellow with really good form. There are hundreds to follow at some time or other.... "

Remember to Save Seed for the Seed Exchange.

Send before
October 31, 1991 to:
Seed Exchange Chairman
Candy Strickland
P.O. Box 112157
Tacoma, WA
98445-2157
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An Almost Fatal Mistake made by Herb Dickson



Herb Dickson tells Editor Maedythe Martin about his 'almost fatal mistake,' while John Kerridge, Vice-President, looks on.

Other primula growers should know about a mistake I made in spraying my plants so they will not make the same mistake. I use two pesticides regularly: Zectran and Meta-Sistox-R. Zectron kills sucking and chewing insects and slugs and has some residual effects. Meta-Sistox-R is a systemic, effective for 4 to 6 weeks, that kills sucking and chewing insects. I have also used two systemic fungicides with good results, Benelate and Subdue. It took two applications each season to control the insects and fungus that attack primula plants.

Now, I thought I would be smart and mix all four products together so that I could make only one spraying. It turned out I only had to make one spraying — everything sprayed, including shrubs and young trees near the plants were killed outright or severely damaged. Luckily there was only enough in my sixty gallon tank to do about two thirds of the way around my stock, or I would have been completely out of business.

This was a major disaster. I lost most of my named auriculas, many species primula and some garden auriculas. Some of the named auriculas I may never be able to replace. The species lost included some for which seed is

seldom offered, and may not be available again. Luckily all my 1990 seedlings were not sprayed, and are doing fine.

The mixture was the most potent herbicide I have ever seen. It killed liverwort, moss, weeds, everything, except primula in the Petiolares section, which suffered no visible damage and responded with vigorous healthy growth. I believe it was the chemical interaction of the four chemicals that made the mixture so potent. In mixing four products, I realize now I should have reduced the recommended amount of each product.

Be truly smart. Always try any chemical or combination of chemicals on a few plants and observe the results before any wide-spread application is made

Herb Dickson of Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery is well known for his extensive primula selection. Luckily, Herb has plants again. He writes that now school is out, he can hire some students to help in the nursery. Also, the cool weather this spring has been good to his primula seedlings, and there should be a variety of species available next spring from his 1991 sowing.

How Do You Get Your Primroses Through the Summer?

Dennis Oakley of Richmond, B.C., Canada, grows a lot of primroses around his house. Refer to his article in the Spring 1990 issue of the Quarterly for a description of his trials and tribulations as a primrose aficionado.

We at the west coast probably have it the easiest of anybody, for though we occasionally "swelter" in temperatures of 75 to 80 degrees F (25 degrees C) this doesn't usually last for more than a few days at a time before it is over.

In my own case, I am additionally fortunate in having a north facing house, so the primulas are mostly planted in the bed on that side of the house. Originally it had been planted with various shrubs which I dug up, leaving only two rhododendrons. We brought in more soil and made a sloping bed. Though the soil is on the heavy side, the primroses seen quite happy.

With all the plants now from seed my wife Renee and I have received from the American Primrose Society seed exchange, and which my wife has germinated, I have gradually had to dig up more lawn to accommodate them. Since our house is only a bungalow, many of the plants are in the sun at midday, so I have incorporated #2 chicken grit and pumice in the soil, and added a top dressing of pea gravel around the plants most exposed.

Under one of the rhododendrons is a soldanella which is really happy in the shade provided. This is very different from our garden in north-west England which faced south. A *Primula vulgaris* there was in full sun, and used to reward us with a cushion of bright yellow flowers every spring. Similarly, in Van Dusen Gardens in Vancouver, many colored candelabra are on the south facing slope and are none the worse for the exposure. However, most primula like to keep their feet cool, so for those of you further east, I would recommend some form of shading for the primroses in the heat of the day.

Bill Brown, an APS board member from Blue Point, New York, writes about his expe-

riences getting alpine auriculas through the eastern summer heat.

Growing auriculas in the eastern section of the United States can be somewhat of a problem. I find our summers present more difficulties than winter conditions.

Summers are usually hot and humid. Night time temperatures rarely offer a respite from the debilitating heat, so hard on primulas. But I have found that auriculas will tolerate an incredible amount of sun. In fact, a lack of full sun often means less bloom or no bloom at all. A three quarter sunny exposure will ensure a good display of flowers.

A few specific cultural directions are very effective in encouraging auriculas in these difficult climatic situations. I make sure that the alpine auriculas have a stony but reasonably rich root run. In addition, all of my auriculas are grown in close proximity to large rocks which afford them a somewhat cooler root run and some protection from sun scorching. To ensure healthy roots and good blooms, I feed my auriculas at least once a month during the growing season with a product called Huma Grow.

Don't be afraid to experiment with alpine auriculas in the garden. They are easy to grow from seed, and should provide enough material for even the most adventurous.

Rosetta Jones, a hybridizer in the Pacific Northwest well known for her exceptionally good double acaulis primroses, has some advice for growers in the area.

For mature primrose plants, I don't have to take any special precautions during the summer months. Some shade is preferable, but full sun is all right if the plants are kept well watered. Fertilize through June.

Seedlings are transplanted year round whenever the notion takes me and time permits. They go into pots or trays. Keep them well watered and shaded through the summer. Once they are

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growing well, they can be set out in garden beds anytime.

In the climate of the Pacific Northwest, summer heat is not much of a threat. It's the winter freezes with no snow cover on non-dormant plants that result in the most losses.

From Toronto in the Great Lakes region comes a report from Barbara Wilkins, who grows primulas and other plants among her extensive collection of choice rhododendrons.

If primulas were not so lovely, I would long ago have given up trying to grow them. In sandy soil on a south facing slope, they do not flourish! The soil is likely the main problem, for while it is a joy to dig, it doesn't grow primroses the way the heavier soils do. The healthy and plump *Primula japonica* clumps in a garden with clay soil not far from here put my sad plants to shame.

However, I struggle on with the more tolerant kinds — some of the farinose and vernaes, *P. auricula*, *P. marginata* and *P. sieboldii*. I am cossetting them with spent mushroom compost, and may yet even import some clay soil!

Getting them through the summer is a matter of placing them where it is relatively cool and shady, out of the afternoon sun, then mulching and watering. They do survive, and though they are not usually overwhelming in bloom in the spring, they are well worth growing, anyway. They are pretty!

Karen Shellinger may be familiar to you from her article "Primroses and Bantys" in the Summer quarterly, 1990. A board member of APS, she has provided some cultural advice from an expert struggling in the less than primula hospitable Minnesota area.

Minnesota summers can be very unpredictable from year to year, so we do the best we can. The only safe thing to do is plant the primulas so they receive only morning sun and are in high shade the rest of the day. If you live on the north shore of Lake Superior, where it's cooler than in the rest of the state, then I think your plants could stand a bit more sun.

Primula plants must never suffer from a lack of water during our hot, muggy summers. They are under enough stress, without drought adding to other things such as spider mites and slugs. I find that primroses go into a sort of summer

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dormancy where there is no growth evident — they just sort of sit there until the last of July. I like to divide them in June just when they are busy making root growth. They are really a forgiving plant if you just give them enough water, and don't water limp hot foliage while the sun is still shining on it!

Some of my plants are in an area caught by the hot afternoon sun, but they are in the shade of a taller perennial plant, and are never thirsty. These primroses really do bloom their heads off in the strong sunlight in the spring, but I must be very careful to water them much more often in the following summer than plants in the protection of afternoon shade. Spider mites are not as much of a problem if the plants are not stressed by drought. You can overwater, too. Try putting a few impatiens among the primulas to tell you when it is time to water again.

Different species of primulas react differently. The sieboldiis, for example, just disappear until next spring. You can't water the japonicas too much. I've seen them doing well in a very boggy situation, which they seem to love. I think the mountain/rock/auricula types can also be overwatered if they don't have good enough drainage. On a hill they can take a lot of moisture, as the drainage is provided by Mother Nature. You can also get away with a heavier soil mix when the plants are on a slope, though pure clay is a difficult growing medium for the poor things.

I tend to water about 5 am so the foliage gets a chance to dry off before the hottest sun hits. There is less chance of disease if the foliage is not wet overnight. But wet foliage is preferable to no watering at all, if your schedule doesn't allow you to water during the day.

The three most important things for growing primulas through Minnesota summers would be:

- enough moisture at all times
- soil that has a lot of organic material for its moisture-holding ability and yet provides some drainage
- shade during the hottest part of the day: 11 am to 6 pm.

Mulching Your Primroses

by Cy Happy

I've been thinking about results from a few mulches. They are all good, but some are better.

Lawn clippings. Apply lightly right after mowing every week or two. If you apply too much at once, it packs down, cakes and excludes air. No air, no root growth. Beware of weeds.

Fresh sawdust. It stays put and lets air through, doing a good job as a mulch. It keeps soil and roots cool and moist. On the negative side, sawdust is not very attractive and will rob the soil of nitrogen as it breaks down. A light application of ammonium sulfate solves the nitrogen deficiency.

Well-rotted sawdust. This was the favorite of the great Portland gardener, Mrs. A. C. U. Berry. It quickly turned her average plants into giants. However, its life as a mulch is brief – quickly becoming part of the soil. Soon the gardener must pile on more and more rotted sawdust, and the rule of moderation is broken. The soil's organic content far exceeds the mineral content; it sours and compacts easily. Deep digging helps. So does sand.

Sand, rock chips, gravel. These protect crowns from winter wet and waterlogging but

not from excessive freezing. Alternate with other mulches. Mrs. Berry used sand to protect and stimulate roots of potted primulas. When repotting and dividing, she washed off all dirt, removed damaged roots and pests. Then she coated the moist roots with dry sand. The plant was then carefully repotted, leaving the sand in place on the roots. Sand is a good covering for seed during the rainy season.

Peat moss. This is not good as a mulch. It dries quickly and is hard to make moist again. It blows away. It is best to mix peat moss into the soil. Make sure it is **wet** before putting in plants.

Chippings. Road crews and utility companies frequently run brush and limbs through a chipper. The chippings are a mixture of materials and sizes and, I think, superior to sawdust. Smaller pieces blend into the soil. Larger ones hold it down. Larger rhododendrons thrive in pure chippings. Some of the woodland and bog primulas do too.

Mulch in summer for moisture retention and cool roots. Mulch in winter for protection and sudden freezing and thawing, drying winds, heaving and keeping the roots warm and functioning. Many primroses are killed by dehydration when their roots are frozen.

NATIONAL AURICULA AND PRIMULA SOCIETY — *Northern Section*

Invites all Auricula and Primula Lovers to join in this Old Society

Membership includes Yearbook

D.G. Hadfield

146 Queens Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, England

Gold-Laced Polyanthus for the Garden

by John Kerridge

For some years I have been working to develop a good garden polyanthus with the distinctive gold laced markings known for centuries. The objective has been to develop a good, hardy garden plant with increased flower size. These are not show plants for the purist!

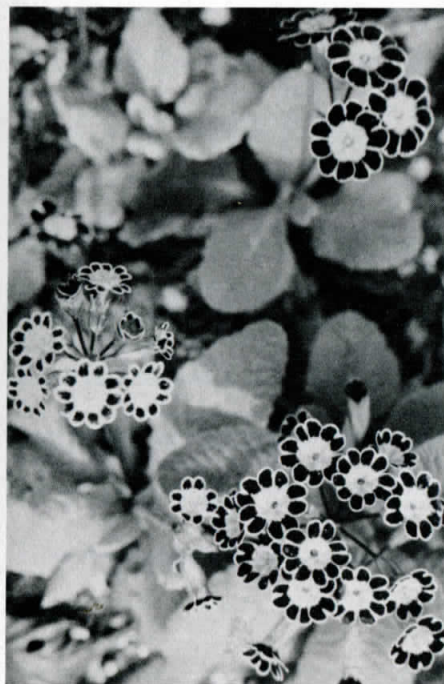
Such a tall order has not been easy to achieve, nor do satisfactory results come quickly. Starting several years ago, with seed from the American Primula Society seed exchange labeled gold laced polyanthus X polyanthus, I have interbred selected seedlings over the years to obtain my goal. I think the original cross was made by Larry Bailey, and the plants have shown considerable promise. Not only did I cross-pollinate the seedlings from the original hybrids, but I have used pollen from Barnhaven gold-laced polyanthus maintain the characteristic lacing.

Just as it is necessary to raise many plants from seed to obtain a good gold-laced polyanthus, it is necessary to raise many of this cross to obtain exceptional ones. In general the best forms in terms of lacing, size and sturdy stems have been interbred. I consistently select flowers with the darker ground, preferably black,

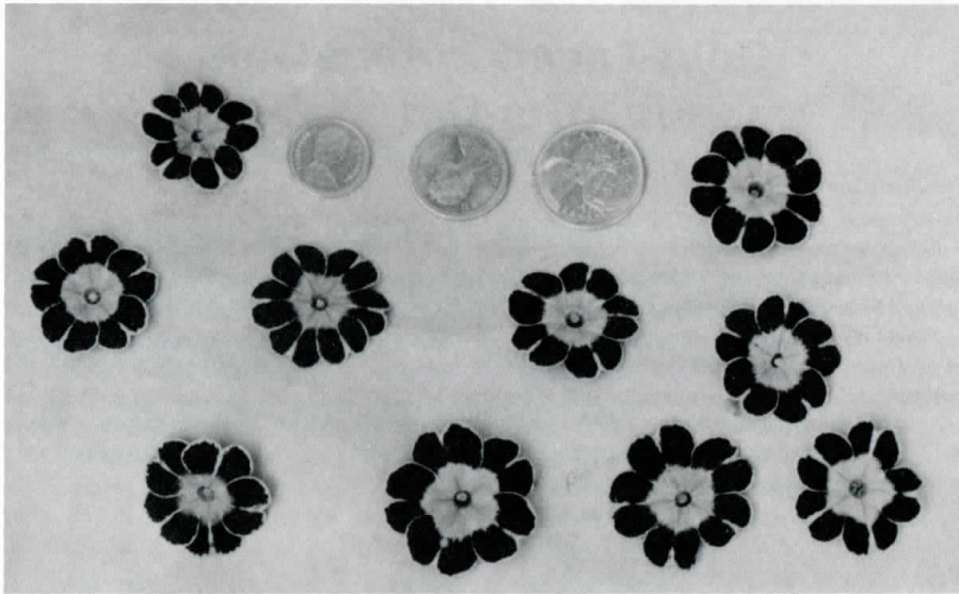
with a bright gold eye and good lacing. It is disappointing that there is so much variation in the seedlings, but there is now a general tendency to a better overall plant, and certainly to an increased flower size.

Hardiness has been proven for this area with no problem from the cold during a winter with temperatures steadily at 14 degrees below zero celsius, and no snow cover. This is admittedly not cold compared to some zones. (+5 degrees F.) The biggest problem is the abnormally heavy, cold rain in the early spring. Rot sets in, and plants are lost. Professional advisors suggested using a fertilizer high in potassium to stimulate root growth and counteract the rot. Since this treatment began a few months ago, seedlings have turned around and are growing again.

Flowers from the crosses are shown in the photograph in relation to Canadian coins. These are similar in size to the American, and you can see there are a number of flowers larger than a quarter. This is much larger than the traditional gold-laced polyanthus whose flowers are expected to be more like the American dime. The gold-lacing on the blooms shown in the photograph is not ideal as yet. One thing is certain: for general interest in the garden, there is barely any equal. The effect is striking. Efforts to improve the strain are continuing, but they will occur slowly as the plants never breed true to their parents. The good ones are precious, and, although scarce, are worth the effort.



Kerridge's gold-laced polyanthus seedlings in the garden.



Flowers larger than a quarter already achieved through John Kerridge's hybridizing program.



A wall of ribbons: John tacks up his awards on the wall of his greenhouse.



John Kerridge examines seedlings in his greenhouse.

John Kerridge, Vice-President of the Society this year, has an avid interest in primulas and auriculas, and has started Saltspring Primroses. The last winter was very poor for seed production, but next year may be kinder.

BOOK REVIEW

Primulas - The Complete Guide, by Mary A. Robinson. The Crowood Press, Swindon, Wiltshire, England, 1990

There are numerous top notch books on primulas, but until now it has been awkward trying to locate specific information on species, cultivars and hybrids without thumbing through a variety of books and bulletins. Mary Robinson's comprehensive book provides information for the novice as well as the expert in a flowing, easy to read manner. I find myself using the book frequently for reference.

Most of the beautiful color plates in Mary's book are of plants that you can buy, grow from seed, or exchange with other primula growers. The book also provides a lot of valuable practical advice on cultivation and propagation. Her perceptive comments will enhance your pleasures of gardening. There are answers to some of those perplexing questions that bother the primula fan, for the average gardener as well as the collector.

There are several unexpected gems of information in the book. For example, I have been unsuccessfully searching for years to try and find out whether any members of the Vernales Section (now called Section Primula) can be propagated from leaf cuttings. The answer is there. Yes — leaf cuttings are possible for some of the Vernales Section.

The list of *Primula marginata* and its hybrids is extensive, and the list of juliana hybrids is long and informative.

This thorough, helpful, lucid and enjoyable book is highly recommended.

Review by Don Keefe



Rae Berry

A Snapshot View of Rae Berry

by Cy Happy

November 1955. I was the speaker at the November meeting of APS. The weather had turned cold, so I took the train to Portland. A member met me at the station and drove me to Mrs. Berry's, where I was to spend the night.

I had never met her. I only knew she was totally deaf and a great gardener and plants person. As we sat in her breakfast nook getting acquainted, conversation was uninhibited. She even understood when I mispronounced Latin plant names.

We talked of other things — pride in her Jewish heritage, how she lost her hearing at age 16. I wish I had the background then to appreciate her fully. I think of her now as a great intellect, filled with energy that was directed at the silent world of plants.

That night the blizzard struck. By morning her energy was given over to her garden treasures and mine to getting home.

News from the Chapters

Eastside

The program at the May 6 meeting was a discussion of native American primulas, with color slides, by Thea Oakley, President of the Chapter. Peter Atkinson of anomalous primrose fame, gave a demonstration and talk on primula hybridizing at the June 3 meeting.

Seattle

The topic "Developing the Double Acaulis Primula" was presented by Rosetta Jones, well known in the area for her high quality doubles with such good form.

The Chapter toured the Lakewold Gardens in Tacoma on May 18th. A report of the trip is found at the end of the Notes.

A pot luck picnic is planned at Mary Seitz and Don Keefe's at 11 a.m. on August 17th. Joe Dupre will talk about pests and pest control. There will also be a tour of Mary and Don's garden.

Washington State

A recap of the National Show, and show results were discussed at the May meeting of the Washington State Chapter who hosted the National Show this year. Members also reminisced about the fun they have had raising these beautiful flowers and the future we have in primroses.

Darlene Heller, another member of the Chapter, presented the June program on *Primula*

capitata. She has raised many of these fine and unusual primula.

President Gene Reichle is trying to arrange a jointly sponsored program with Jay Lunn speaking on Native American Primulas, perhaps in September. Jay's knowledgeable article illustrated with beautiful photographs in the Spring issue of the American Rock Garden Society *Bulletin* indicates this will be a program to anticipate with a great deal of pleasure. More on this later. (*Editor's note: the program is arranged for early September. Contact your Chapter President or watch for fall newsletters for exact details.*)

Tacoma

Stan Orton, the "mole man" was featured at the May meeting, to tell members how to outwit the pesky creatures. The June meeting was a visit to Cy and Rita Happy's new home and rock garden. Cy is now the President of the Society.

Special Note

All the Chapters announced the Annual Summer Picnic and Board Meeting to be held at Herb Dickson's home and nursery, the Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery on June 13, 1991. This is a pot luck festivity, and all American Primrose Society members are invited to participate — just bring your own serving dishes and cutlery, as well as your favorite hot dish, salad or dessert. There will be a plant auction, and members with extra primula plants, or even other plants, are encouraged to donate them.

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Rosetta Jones on Hybridizing Double Primroses

May Meeting, Seattle Chapter

About twenty members turned out for this meeting and went home loaded up with information from Rosetta Jones on breeding the double acaulis primula. Rosetta talked about the importance of setting goals when starting out on this particular primrose path. A good aim would be to improve the strength of the flower stems. She told of the recessive doubling gene in *Primula X juliae* 'Jay Jay' and how it has affected her program. She described what to look for to obtain doubling and stressed the importance of keeping records of crosses made and results. In this way, we could develop our own line-breeding program. Later, she very generously gave us some seed from her crosses.

Trip to Lakewold

The following Saturday we visited Lakewold Gardens in Tacoma. The gardens were devel-

oped by the late Mrs. Eulalie Wagner and her husband, the late Corydon Wagner, from designs made by the famous landscape designer Thomas Church. Even the rain could not disguise the magnificence of this garden. Many rare trees and shrubs achieved a size seldom seen in the Northwest. However, the blue poppy, *Meconopsis betonicifolia*, was in flower, to everyone's delight. There were not many primulas to be found in bloom, but there was a stand of candelabra primulas that were very well budded.

Cy Happy had kindly invited us to eat lunch at his home which is very near by. Here members were delighted to see all kinds of promising plants from Cy's hybridising programs, including a double pink auricula — to die for!

Thus encouraged by wit, wisdom and luscious chocolate brownies made by Rita Happy, we went home hoping to find flowers on our own primulas with which we could experiment.

Reports by Barbara Flynn



Landscape architect Thomas Church studies his creation, the knot or herb garden at Lakewold Gardens

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Primula Worldwide

April 10-12, 1992 –
Beaverton, Oregon

Expert speakers are confirmed for the international symposium to be held next April. You may not be familiar with all those presenting information in the formal presentations and the workshops, so further biographical information is included here.

Keynote Speakers

Ron McBeath, is a renown primula enthusiast and collector. He has lead several expeditions to the Himalayas, Nepal and the Yunnan region of China. A regular speaker at rock and alpine gardening conferences, he provides knowledgeable insight into collection and cultivation of the species primula, based on his experience at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh.

Duncan Lowe, one of the co-authors of *Primulas of Europe and America* is a renown amateur artist, and provided many of the line drawings in that reference work. His articles on collecting and growing primulas, as well as primula-related rock garden plants such as soldanella, are frequently found in the Alpine Garden Society bulletin, as he is a member of that society. He also has collected in the Himalayas, and is a well versed and respected plantsman. Primulas are a long standing and consuming enthusiasm for him, and he has an impressive collection about which he speaks very knowledgeable.

Two prominent gardening and Sakurasoh experts from Japan, **Mr. Looichi Ogaki** and **Mr. Tsuneo Torii** will travel over to speak on *Primula seiboldii*, the Japanese show primula, known as sakurasoh. Mr. Ogaki is a lecturer at the Tokyo Biotechnology Institute and the Dai-3 High School attached to the Tokyo College of Agriculture. He is also advisor to the Matsumoto Sakurasoh and Primula Club, and appears on Japanese television gardening programs. Another collector of primula species, he has added to our knowledge of the distribution of *Primula reinii* and has written books and numerous ar-

ticles on native Japanese primula, plant biotechnology and sakurasoh.

Mr. Tsuneo Torii is Director of the Tokyo Metropolitan Green Information Center, head of the Sakurasoh Society and a counsellor for the Japanese Horticulture Society. He has written a book of Sakurasoh, as well as a number of articles on gardening in general as well as *Primula seiboldii*. He also occasionally appears on television programs on gardening.

Sylvia "Tass" Kelso, lectures on arctic and alpine environments, plant diversity and evolution, geology and ecology of the Colorado plateau, and plant systematics at Colorado College where she is an assistant professor in the Department of Biology. For many years she has studied northern native North America primula, and has worked on evolutionary connections between Asiatic and North American species of Primula. A record of her work has been published in an impressive number of articles in botanical journals. As well as presentations at the American Rock Garden Society Annual Meeting. She has travelled to Europe a number of times to speak on the biology of alpine primula and the phyto-geography of Alaska.

A number of our own American Primrose Society Members will also be presenting papers or leading workshops. President Cy Happy and long time primula enthusiast, along with Sybil McCulloch, an alpine gardener with a special interest in primula, will survey the development of the primula as a garden plant. June Skidmore will tell you about constructing a trough in which to plant alpine primulas. Karen Schellinger, a member of the APS board, and writer for the quarterly will present cultural information for the primrose grower. Rosetta Jones will provide some insight into her hybridizing history of double primroses and auriculas. Kris Fenderson will clarify the new nomenclature for primulas.

Other specialists from Nurseries in the region will be there to provide further dimensions in growing primulas. This presents a unique opportunity to ask them your questions.

Exotic *Primula megaseifolia* from Turkey: a Hybridizers's Dream?

by Don Keefe

In March Cy Happy gave me a division of an unusual primula, *Primula megaseifolia*. Cy has been interested in this plant for many years, and I was really pleased to get a piece of the plant he had finally raised from seed about two years ago.

This primula has an important characteristic that could have a major impact on primula hybridizing in the future. Like *Primula juliae*, it has a rhizomous characteristic, more commonly known to gardeners as creeping rootstalk.

Since early spring when I received this plant, I have been researching and reading all I can find about Section Megaseifolia. The intriguing thing about this section is that it is grouped in the larger subgenus Primula, which also includes the vernaes as well as *Primula juliae*. So there

is good potential for hybridizing *P. megaseifolia* with other vernaes and julianas. Imagine exiting new primroses in velvet colors such as the Cowichans but with creeping root stalk. The possibilities stagger my imagination.

In researching *P. megaseifolia*, I found two sources with substantial information, and I have put together some descriptive information on the primulas in this section. There were other references and they are all listed in the bibliography at the end.

Section Megaseifolia

Section **Megaseifolia** includes two species: *Primula megaseifolia* and *Primula renifolia*. Megaseifolia is also spelt megaseaefolia in some references, particularly European. The name refers to a similarity in the leathery oval leaves to the hardy garden perennial called *Megasea*



Primula megaseifolia in Cy Happy's rockery.

cordifolia in the 1950s but more commonly known as *Bergenia cordifolia*. Both these primula are rarely seen in cultivation as seed and plants have been extremely difficult to obtain. However, Valerie Wooley fellow APS member from England advised me she has raised *P. megaseifolia* from seed from one of the distributors, perhaps seed from the National Auricula and Primula Society seed exchange.

Primula megaseifolia

Location: In their natural environment, they grow in a limited area close to the Black Sea, on the south slope of the Trebizond Mountains. The area covers a distance of over 80 miles in northeast Turkey and the adjoining province of Batum, U.S.S.R. in the western Caucasus. Primula plants are found in moss and rocks, except limestone, covered by a canopy of subtropical broad leaved forests, mainly beech. They grow in cool, shady gorges at elevations ranging from 160 to 3,600 feet. Often they are found under or around rhododendrons. When *P. megaseifolia* is found in a sunny location, which is seldom, it will be growing alongside a stream, with its roots in the flowing water.

General Description: *Primula megaseifolia* has dark evergreen leaves on red petioles that are egg shaped to rounded. The leathery somewhat hairy leaves are 2 to 6 inches (2.5 to 15 cm) long and 2 to 5 inches (2.5 to 12 cm) wide. The red tinted flower stalks, slightly taller than the leaves, are topped by a small umbel of flowers. There are usually up to nine pink, magenta or purple flowers under 1 inch (2.5 cm) in diameter. Flowers have white eyes and a yellow throat. Unlike other members of the Subgenus Primula, the leaf blade for *P. megaseifolia* is clearly distinct from the leaf stalk.

P. megaseifolia flowers very early — in mid winter or the early spring. One report says that it will bloom in the wild for over a month, starting in March. The plant is closely related to the vernaes in chromosome number, habit and inflorescence. It was brought to England in 1896, but was never a popular plant, probably due to its scarcity.

Propagation: *P. megaseifolia* is thought to be winter hardy and reliable in some areas.

However, away from its natural habitat, seed is difficult to germinate and few seedlings appear. It is very susceptible to damping off disease and definitely requires protection from wet conditions in the winter. For the connoisseur in the Pacific Northwest, it can succeed in cool shady outdoor areas. For less skilled growers, it will flourish more readily in an alpine house.

Divide your plant as soon as it has finished flowering. Plants produce seed freely in their natural habitat, but set only a few in gardens. This may have something to do with pollination in nature by night-flying moths. Rarely find those in Northwest gardens!

Hybridizing: According to records available, *P. megaseifolia* and *P. juliae* were crossed to produce a hybrid. Lawrence Wigley has reportedly crossed *P. megaseifolia* with a pink primrose (Section Vernaes) and produced a seedling. The hybrid plants were sturdy and floriferous and both are said to have kept *P. megaseifolia*'s early flowering habit.

Rhizomatous Roots: *P. megaseifolia* has a long rhizome with bud scale leaves that are 2 to 6 inches (5 to 15 cm) long. I have come across several definitions of what "rhizome" means. To me, a rhizome is a rootlike underground stem that in some cases, may produce buds of new growth at intervals, like *P. juliae*. The primula world was literally set on fire when *P. juliae* and its stoloniferous root system was introduced to the hybridizers of the primula world. If *P. megaseifolia* has a creeping rootstalk that will produce a matlike growth of plants, the impact on the primula world could be tremendous. But does it?

Additional information received from Cy Happy this year. His seed took two years to germinate. Two years ago, one of the plants was placed outdoors in a small alcove in a vertical rockery. It was sheltered from the wind and rain, and to some extent from the cold, by the rocks. Cy estimates that he has removed about six divisions from the plant each year for the past two years. His plant has creeping rootstalks and multiplies and divides like a *P. juliae* hybrid.

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Another In the Section

The second plant in Section Megaseifolia is *Primula renifolia*. Curiosity about this member of the Section drove me on to research this plant too.

Primula renifolia

Location: In its natural environment, *Primula renifolia* grows in a relatively small area in the U.S.S.R. in the west Caucasus. This area is found about 40 miles to the west of Mt. Elbruz in the Teberda Valley, quite some distance from the Black Sea. The plants can be found among the pines and deciduous trees at an elevation of about 3,300 to 6,600 feet.

General Description: *Primula renifolia* was discovered in the mid-thirties but was not found in general cultivation until about ten years ago. It is a dwarf version of *P. megaseifolia*, only 4 inches high, and is said to be hardier. The leaves are short, with a rounded blade only 3 inches (3 to 5 cm) wide, that are somewhat kidney shaped. The leaf stem is slender and slightly winged. A fully grown *P. renifolia* resembles *P. obconica*. The umbel usually has two to three flowers that are bluish-violet with a yellow eye. The plant has a short rhizome. No other details are provided. How much of a creeping rhizome does it have?

Propagation: I have found no information of any consequence on growing this rare plant in cultivation. Maybe some of our fellow primula enthusiasts in Britain will share their experiences.

The Spanish Mystery Plant

The final member of the Vernaes section that is not well known is *Primula legionensis*, the Spanish mystery plant which Cy Happy wrote about in the Quarterly some years ago. (**Primroses**, v. 36, no.4, Fall 1977) Outstanding questions remain: does this plant have creeping rootstalk? What are the hybrids like that the Spanish have made between *Primula legionensis* and other vernaes? Can this plant also be crossed with *Primula megaseifolia*?

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I've identified all these challenges for primula hybridizers. Who is going to set to work on them? After looking at the plant for about a month, I gave it to Peter Atkinson, who has several hybridization programs underway. I will go on gathering information, as time permits, and Peter can get on with hybridizing *Primula megaseifolia*.

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Notes from the Editor

Our Fiftieth Anniversary

This year, 1991, is the 50th year for the American Primrose Society. To commemorate our anniversary, I think there should be a special issue of the Quarterly in the fall. It will contain reminiscences of events over the years from members who can remember earlier times and historical vignettes.

All members are welcome to submit material for this issue. If you are willing to report on your history with the society, or have an interesting moment to relay, please send your information to the editor by September the first.

Queen Anne Foundling

A few years ago, Gerry Sedenko, an APS member and garden writer in the Seattle area, found a silver laced polyanthus in a garden on Queen Anne Hill, in which he was weeding at the time. It is a strong, prolific grower, and Gerry has passed divisions of the plant, which he has christened Queen Anne Foundling, around to friends. The lacing is good for a garden plant, though this variety is pin eyed, but it has a vigorous constitution and sets divisions with generous regularity.

This year Gerry has some seedlings from his hybridization of the original plant. Next year will reveal what the progeny look like. We look forward to a report.

Asian Species Primula in the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden

In a flying visit to capture some species primula on film before their spring season had passed into summer, I made a trip with photographer Jennifer Lort to the mainland to visit the University of British Columbia Botanic Garden. Bodil Leamy, the director of the garden, a member of

APS over the years, and a donor to the seed exchange took us around, and we did indeed see some treasures. *Primula japonica* and *P. pulverulenta* were in full glory, some naturalized down stream beds. These plants are raised from seed by the garden, and grown in natural surroundings in the section of the garden devoted to Asian species plants.



Primula japonica 'Postford White' at the UBC Botanical garden.



Grown from collected seed, *Primula pulverulenta* displays characteristic meal down the stem.



A drift of *Primula japonica* 'Millar's Crimson' in the UBC Botanic Garden.

Two mystery plants have emerged among the primula in blooming this year. The first, from seed collected by an expedition to China, is like a *P. japonica* in habit, but has an unusual starry, maroon four-petalled flower. The second arrived in a batch of seed labelled *P. chionantha* but it is clearly not that plant. This one, which may be a form of *P. sinopurpurea*, has a tall, stately habit, and large pale pink flowers with a red eye. There is a lovely dusting of meal down the stem.

Another eye-catcher was *Primula chungensis*, reported by Fenderson to come from alpine marshes at 2900-3200 m. in Bhutan, west Sichuan and west Yunnan in China, and Assam in India. His description is pale orange, while this was a show stopping, bright, clear orange with unusual asymmetrical flowers which have slightly longer lower petals. Wouldn't the botanists among us have a great time identifying these unusual asiatic primroses grown from seed collected in uncommon places.

The plant I enjoyed seeing the most that day was *Primula grandis*, or *P. Sredinsky grandis*

according to Kris Fenderson. It has received very bad press from Walter Blasdale, among others, but, in my opinion, has a lot of grace and charm. Blasdale says:

"The flowers consist of long cylindrical tubes whose corollas split into five linear lobes which expand but slightly even at maturity. ... The single species [in this section] was discovered in 1866 at elevations of from 6,000 to 9,500 feet in the northwest slopes of the Caucasus Range. Although introduced into cultivation in 1877 and found to be easily grown it has never aroused much interest. The foliage is abundant and rather pleasing but the pendant flowers are too small and poorly colored to be attractive."



The cascading flowers of *Primula grandis*. Notice the seed capsule that then stands up in the air.

In the flesh, the flower is a characteristic pale primrose yellow, and the long pedicel stems at the top of the flower scape droop in an attractive linear shape like a small fountain on every stem.

Then, when the seed are set, the stem stands straight up in the air, providing comic relief from all this aesthetic appreciation. Bodil Leamy had sent seed to the APS Seed Exchange this year, and needless to say I requested some at once. I hope it does prove easy from seed.

Large clumps of *Primula veris* ssp *columnae* appeared in a number of places in the garden, including the herb garden, most appropriately. This plant now has settled in so successfully it seeds itself, and a number of variations in the form are apparent. Imagine having primroses seeding themselves in your garden.

Hybridizing News

Peter Atkinson of anomalous primrose fame is at it again. Continuing with his Garryard oxslip crosses, he has seedling flowering for the first time this year that have apricot or salmon pink flowers. Contrasting with the dark Garryard foliage — what a picture. These are third generation crosses for him. Another group of seedling produced small dark red violet flowers with a stripe down the centre of the petal. The gene that produced the stripe in the *Primula X juliana* 'Kinlough Beauty,' which originated in Ireland, is clearly there in these flowers.

His next challenge is a double gold-laced polyanthus. There are seed pods. We look forward to reports of what the seed produce in 1992. There are references to double gold-laced polyanthus from earlier centuries, but no plants that are known of in cultivation now. Good luck, Peter.

Barnhaven Article

The Royal Horticultural Society publication *The Garden* has an article on Barnhaven in the April 1991 issue entitled "Barnhaven, the End of an Era." The author, Ken Beeken, who has "a plantsman's garden in North Yorkshire where primulas and florist flowers play an important role," recounts for us the history of Barnhaven, and some of the superb hybridizing achievements of Florence Bellis. The photographs capture some of the wonderful colorful primroses she developed. Seek it out in your library, if you don't subscribe to this journal.

An Elegant Primula

A second article on primroses appeared in the June issue of *The Garden*. This one, by Brenda McLean, entitled "An Elegant Primula" recounts the history behind the discovery of *Primula viallii*. It is a fascinating story, as *P. viallii* is one of the plants discovered by the Jesuit priest Delavay in Yunnan, China. Curiously, there are no references to indicate the sources of her historical research.

A member of our own society has also documented this story for our enjoyment. Barbara Flynn recounted the history of this striking primula for us in 1989. She spent many hours in the Elisabeth C. Miller Library at the Center for Urban Horticulture, and found some satisfying nuggets of historical information. Look her article up in the Fall 1990 issue of the APS bulletin, and refresh your memory.

Certificate of Award

Once the Quarterly is printed, do you ever stop to think how it gets mailed to you? The answer is our hard-working member Candy Strickland. Not only is she president of the

Tacoma Chapter of the American Primrose Society, and director of the seed exchange, she labels, sorts and mails each edition of the Quarterly.

This spring she was awarded a special certificate for outstanding service by the Tacoma Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society, of which she is also a member. Congratulations, Candy. The American Primrose Society and the editor also appreciate your help.



Candy Strickland and Cy Happy at the National Show.



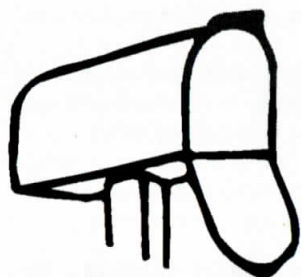
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FROM THE MAIL BOX

Letter to Don Keefe from the Dansk Primula Klub

... I can tell you a little about myself. I am a civil engineer, and have been manager of a company where we developed and produced autopilots for ships. I am now retired. I am chairman for the Danish Primula Society. We have about 220 members in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland. In Scandinavia, we have no language problems. We can read and understand the different languages.

As far as I know, we are the only primula club on the European mainland....

Our Society was started in September, 1982, and in our short history, we have introduced show auriculas to Scandinavia. I have had good help from friends in England.... We have also introduced *Primula sieboldii* hybrids from Japan. In Japan they are called Sakurasoh....

I am especially interested in seeds of *Primula X juliana* hybrids, *P. pruhonica* and *P. vulgaris*, acaulis types....

Yours sincerely,
Ove Leth-Moller
Danmarksvej 41B
2800 Lyngby, Danmark

If any members have seed they would like to send to Mr. Leth-Moller, I'm sure he would be interested and appreciate them. — Editor

Letter to the Editor from Thea Foster

This year... more allergy. At our new location we are surrounded by alders and Balms of Gilead. This resulted in many weeks of being unable to do anything but breathe.... Give me an ache or pain over an itch any day!

...One thing that has helped keep my spirits up was the flowering of a few seedlings of *Primula marginata* 'Agee' X *P. marginata* 'Col. Champney's Variety.' They were crossed in April 1989, and seed went in fresh in early August. Seed of *P. marginata* from the seed exchange has never germinated for me no matter how long the seed pots were retained. The 'Agee' X 'Col. Champney Variety' seed started germinating in two or three months, October 1989, and continued into the spring.

The germination was low, compared to ordinary auriculas but about twenty seedlings were pricked out. I had no idea how long the seedlings would take to flower — at least two or three years? To my utter delight the four largest sent up nice clusters of bloom this April, 16 to 18 months after seeding.

Two were brighter blue than 'Agee' and one had a showier white eye. The ones yet to flower are growing well. Leaves are lovely....

I have read so many times about the failure of *P. marginata* seed to germinate. Fresh seed is obviously the answer....

Thea Foster,
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779 East 21st St.
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Membership includes a subscription to the Quarterly *Primroses*, seed exchange privileges, slide library privileges and the opportunity to join a Round Robin.

Publication

Back issues of the quarterly are available from the secretary.

Manuscripts for publication in the Quarterly are invited from members and other gardening experts, although there is no payment. Please include black and white photographs if possible. Send articles directly to the Editor, Maedythe Martin, 951 Joan Cres., Victoria, B.C., Canada V8S 3L3

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