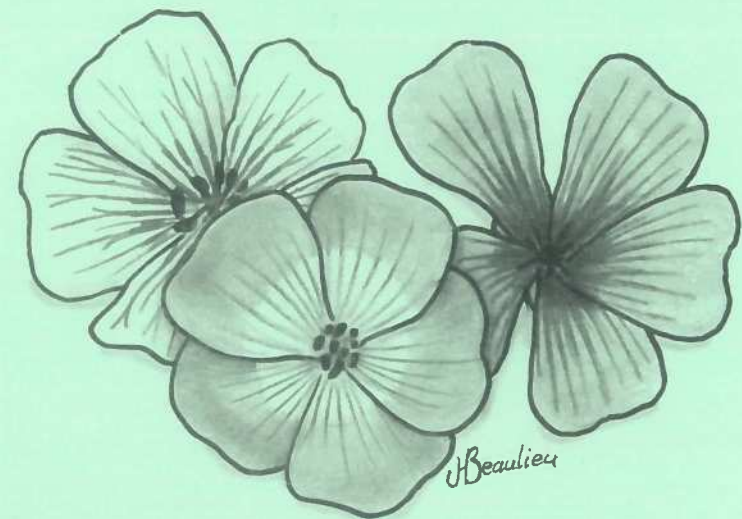


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GERANIACEAE GROUP NEWS

Autumn 2017

www.geraniaceae-group.org

The Geraniaceae Group News, Autumn 2017

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Cover picture – *G. wallichianum* variants - John Beaulieu

Editorial

David Victor

The Seed Exchange

In the last issue, I announced the sad news that Allan Robinson had decided to resign from managing our seed exchange, that he would not be available to handle this year's exchange and that we urgently needed to find a replacement. I am very pleased to say that one of our Members, Alan Butler, recently responded very positively to this need and agreed to take the job on. Alan is particularly appropriate for this role, as he already does the job for the *International Asclepiad Society*, so has much experience of the tasks involved.

We are taking the opportunity caused by this change to update our rules for the scheme. Not every Member participates in the scheme, so we believe it would be fair to make the scheme self-funding, this should also help avoid the need to put up membership rates in the near future. Thus, in future, we will charge 30 pence per packet for each packet of seeds provided. To encourage donations, seed donors will get a free packet for every packet that is accepted from them and will only pay half price (15 pence) for any further packets they take. In addition, there will be a postage and package charge of £2.00 for each package sent.

We also need to make the scheme simpler and smoother to operate. To this end, the scheme will be totally administered by email; paper lists of the seeds will not be available. Alan will send out the list to those members who have let us have their email addresses. All requests must be made by email and Alan will respond by email giving availability and saying how much they will cost. All requests will be dealt with on a strict first come, first served basis.

Having received Alan's offer, the seeds should be paid for. Again, to minimise the administrative tasks and the fees involved, all payments must be made by PayPal, in sterling to our normal address: geraniaceae_group@btinternet.com. Once payment has been received, Alan will send the seeds.

Seed comes to us from various donors and, as a result, we cannot accept any responsibility for failure of seed to germinate. Nor can we accept any responsibility for seed lost in the post or confiscated by customs or similar. I'm sure that it also goes without saying that only current Members of the Group may participate.

We will send out a test to every email address we have on our Membership list in early October. If you (or a friend) do not get that message by the end of October, please let us know by email at:

geraniaceae_group@btinternet.com

This year there will be delays to the scheme as we are only just working on setting it up, there is much to do and it is unlikely that Alan will be ready until early 2018. From next year on, we hope to bring the start date earlier. However, to help matters along, please send any donations to Alan as soon as you can: he has suitable storage and is looking forward to receiving donations. His address and email are as follows:

Spanbox B38. C. C. La Trocha 3C, 29100 Coin, Malaga, Spain.
Alan Butler <alan-brook-side@hotmail.com>

Note for Donors: Donors should send one type per packet with as much information about that type as possible. In particular you should include whether it is wild collected, open or controlled pollination and details of any known provenance. The closing date for receipt this year is mid-December.

Our organisation

As discussed above, we have a new Seed Scheme Manager in post and getting things moving. I am sure that we will all want to wish Alan great success and thank him in advance for his efforts.

There have also been positive developments since last time on the replacement for me as International Cultivar Registrar for *Geranium & Erodium*: we are approaching final discussions I hope to be able to make an announcement in the next issue.

As far as the Meeting and Membership Secretary roles are concerned, these are still outstanding. I am particularly anxious to find someone who will take on the Membership Secretary role, which is a very important one for the Group. So, please let me know if you can help.

Geranium caeruleatum continued...

In the last two newsletters, I included a couple of articles discussing some of the rarer species that seem to be in danger of being lost from cultivation. I recently heard from Oliver Folkard, a keen grower of Geraniums and the raiser of that lovely plant G. 'Ann Folkard' back in the 1970's. He tells me that, like so many of us, he has grown many of these more unusual species over the years, but that most have since perished. This often reflected the dryness of East Anglia – apparently, living in "Baron's Close", does not reflect its earlier possession by nobility, but the barrenness of the local heathland.

At the time of writing, he thought that he was down to his last plant of *G.pseudosibiricum* and similar with *G. caeruleatum*. He had kept his plant of *G.christensenianum* going for some years, though "rather unhappily", but no longer

has it, although it does appear to have hybridised with G. 'Salome' which did grow nearby, the offspring appearing to be a rather paler version of itself.

G. 'Ann Folkard' is, of course, a hybrid between two fine species that also seem to be seen less frequently nowadays, *G. procurrens* and *G. lambertii*. Neither is widely available according to the internet, though there are one or two possible suppliers. Oliver also mentioned G. 'Salome', yet another fine product of the hybridisation of *G. lambertii* and *G. procurrens*.

I'm pleased to say that my plant of *G. caeruleatum*, which I had worried might have been lost during a move around in the garden last autumn, has come through and has flowered well this year. I was also very pleased to notice that two small plants of *G. strictipes* have survived, although both are still to flower: though that may merely be a reflection that they emerge late in the year.

Seed germination

Clive Brooks dropped me a note recently about his experience with the seed exchange this year. He said how pleased he had been with the Group Germination and Collection sheet provided to him by Allan Robinson with his seeds. Following the advice he received he used tweezers to hold the seeds on damp kitchen towel, so that he could remove the seed coats using a sharp, pointed knife.

He then put the seeds into folded damp kitchen roll and placed three of these in a three inch by six inch plastic box, with a loosely fitting lid. He used an eye-dropper (a glass tube, with a rubber end) and glass tube, purchased from a local chemist, to ensure that the water used was clean and to aid accurate delivery. This combination made everything much easier. At the time of writing, he had about fifteen young plants which were doing very well in a few short weeks.

It is always interesting for other members to hear about your successes (and failures), so please let me know how you get on.

Pelargoniums in Germany

A friend of mine in the *Hardy Plant Society* forwarded me a note that the *Pelargonium* section of the *German Horticultural Society* was holding a week-end conference at Steinfurt during August discussing the importance of historic cultivars. I noticed that amongst the speakers was the Managing Director of the Society talking on the subject of the Goldlack & Flieder Project, which concerns the conservation of historic plants, a subject that is totally new to me.

If any of our German members attended the meeting or know of the project I would welcome some feedback that I might use at a later date in this newsletter.

Facebook Group

Matija Strlic

Members may be interested to know that the Group has established a new online outlet. If you have a Facebook profile, then do please consider joining:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GeraniaceaeGroup/>

The *Facebook* group represents an exciting online extension of our Society: our Newsletter will certainly remain to be a source of excellent technical information and longer articles, and our seed list is a resource as irreplaceable as ever. In fact, we often refer to both in our online discussions.

Group membership is currently open and as of the end of August 2017, we had 420 members. Many online members are also members of our *Geraniaceae Group*: the *Facebook* outlet represents an excellent opportunity to keep in frequent contact with each other, exchange photographs, videos (look for a video of our long-standing member Elena Ioganson looking for pelargoniums in the veld near Pakhuis Pass!) and news about what is currently in flower or otherwise of interest in our collections. The Group moderators are currently John Beaulieu, Marlina Fairbourne, Florent Grenier and Evangelos Skoufakis, as well as myself.

We hope that in times when the life of plant (and other) societies has been irreversibly changed by more and faster online interaction, the *Facebook* group will mesh us together even better, as well as provide content for the *Geraniaceae Group* website and hopefully introduce new members to our society. The online world offers many opportunities!

See also the article on Page 27. – Ed.

Booklist update

Richard Clifton

The new booklet *Pelargonium section Otidia at 2016* was published earlier this year and has been selling as well as these technical books ever do. It is stiff card covers, size A5, 101 pages including bibliography; 18 pages of black & white illustrations of most species from (or of) Types; short discussion of hybrids; The key to the species is rather tentative as I have not seen most species in the wide range which is preferable for a good Key. Not stocked by The Ger. Grp., though available from "R. Clifton" £12 p&p UK £1-50, overseas £3.

I continue to trim the Group's booklist, removing titles that do not sell. It's rather a tragedy that the book by Prof. Dr. Aedo, "*Geranium* subgenus *Erodiodea*" (1996) barely sold the original stock of 10 copies, despite this section containing such decorative garden plants as *G.cinereum*, *G.nanum*, *G.argenteum*, *G.subcaulescens*, *G.aristatum*. But it's only illustrated in black & white of course. It is still listed.

Remember, books have the advantage that they don't have batteries which either run out or explode! And don't get hacked or need Broadband or power cables. Overseas members will find our books now effectively half price compared to 5 years ago partly due to the gradual devaluation of the £; so L'Heritier's book *Geraniologia Icones* (1792 facsimile 1978) is now "a snip"; we also have stock of the booklet "Partial Texts of *Geranium*, *Pelargonium*, *Monsonia*" and the full text in a separate leaflet of the text of *Erodium*, to go with the drawings.

The *Erodium absinthoides* group

Ben Coultrop, UK

The *Erodium absinthoides* complex (subsection *Absinthoidea*) covers a group of about 30 taxa, of which about 17 are in Turkey, the rest range from the Balkans to Ukraine and the Russian steppes. These have been treated in various ways by botanists. In the *Euro+Med Plantbase* for example twelve of these taxa are grouped into one species, ranging from the Balkans and Greece through to Armenia and Georgia. *The PlantList* from RBG Kew lists twenty-one species and seven subspecies.

Here we will look at five taxa which are usually listed as subspecies of *E.absinthoides*. However, these taxa are very different to each other as we will see. So here I will consider them as five distinct species. They all have some characteristics in common: they have intercalary leaflets – small lobes of leaf between the main leaflets, and they are dioecious, with male and female flowers on separate plants. The most distinctive characters have been underlined.

Erodium absinthoides Willd. (*sens. strict.*) (Syn. *E. a. subsp. absinthoides* Willd.)

This has leafy grey stems, with short adpressed hairs. Leaves are narrowly oblong, length 2 to 4 times their width, with segments laxly and deeply bipinnate into lanceolate acute lobes, densely canescent giving the leaves a silvery grey colour. The flowering stems bear 1 to 12 peduncles of white flowers with notched petals in June. Sepals are hairy, not glandular; the beak is 4 to 4.5cms long.

This species is found at relatively low level, at between 100 and 1600m, in steppe, in western central Turkey: provinces Ankara, Isparta, Kirsehir, Konya, and Kutahya.

E. armenum (Trautv.) Woronow (syn *E. a. subsp. armenum* (Trautv.) Davis).

This species is similar to *E. absinthoides* but with green stems, with patent hairs and often bearing sub-sessile glands. Leaves are similar, again narrowly oblong with lanceolate acute ultimate lobes, but are greenish, adpressed pilose. Flowering stems again have 1 to 12 peduncles, but flowers are lavender blue, flowering much later, in July and August; the beak is shorter at 3.5 to 4cms.

This species is found on rocky slopes at a much higher level than *E. absinthoides*, at 2300 to 3200m, in Armenia and eastern Turkey, in provinces Kars, Batman, Bitlis, Erzincan, Erzurum, Van, Bayburt, an area with no overlap with the population of *E. absinthoides*.

E. latifolium (Davis) R.T.F. Clifton (syn. *E. a. subsp. latifolium* (Davis) Davis). This has leaves that are ovate, but shorter, only 1.5 times their width, more simply 1-2-pinnatifid, with short, obtuse teeth, the leaf surface being sub-sericeous, making the leaves rather silvery. The flowering stems have only 1 or 2 peduncles of bright pink flowers in June and July.

It is only found in one location on rough scree limestone in Turkey; province Trabzon at 2500m. Many details are missing from the description of this species (as there is with the others) and a good study in the field (if it is still there!) is needed to fill the gaps.

E. haradjiani P.H. Davis (syn. *E. abs. subsp. haradjianii* (Davis) Davis). This species has leaves similar to *E. latifolium* in shape, broad oblong-ovate, length 1.5 times their width, but with segments lobed only to the middle, with short obtuse teeth. Its leaves have long adpressed hairs and short glandular hairs, giving them a greyish appearance. Flowering stems again have 1 to 2 peduncles bearing 3 to 6 white flowers in July and August. The beak is short at 2.5 to 4.2cms.

This species is endemic to Turkey in one province Osmaniye in the north Amanos Mountains at Döldül Dag at 1500 to 2000m.

E. elatum (Form.) R.T.F. Clifton (syn. *E. a. subsp. balcanicum* (Micevski) Greuter & Burdet).

This has green to grey-green leaves which are oblong and 2-3 pinnatisect, with narrower leaf segments, which distinguish it from the Turkish species above, with ultimate segments that are narrow and linear. The whole plant is covered with simple eglandular and glandular hairs. Flowering stems ascending with umbels of 4 to 8 pink to bluish-violet flowers, with rounded petals, flowering early, in April and May. Sepals have a long mucro of 1.5 to 2 mm. The beak is long being 4.5 to 6 cms.

This species is found in Europe, in Bulgaria, Greece, Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia among rocks on stony calcareous ground above 1600 m.

To conclude, we have five distinct species with good character differences, from different habitats, at differing altitudes, in different locations and different flowering times. The centre of the *E. elatum* population is some 1700km from the *E. armenum* population – about the distance from London to southern Spain.

Good reliable photos of Erodiums on the internet are few and far between, except in the case of the more common species. You should not believe the names given with such pictures without carefully checking them with their descriptions and the known localities for the species. However, I feel the following to be reliable:

E. armenum - visit <http://botany.cz/cs/erodium-absinthoides-armenum/>

The plant shown is labelled as subsp *armenum*.

E. haradjianii – visit <http://botany.cz/cs/erodium-absinthoides-haradjianii/>

This is also labelled as a subspecies.

E. elatum Reliable photos can be found on a PDF at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3372/wfr2012>

click on full text PDF to open it in Adobe Reader or Foxit Reader, and find page 176/177 for photos. They are labelled simply as *Erodium absinthoides* which is misleading because it could be any of the 5 taxa we have been talking about. This is why it is best to regard these as species, then you know which one is meant. We know this is *E. elatum* because it matches the description, and was photographed in Bulgaria – correct for this species.

Also see http://www.bio.bas.bg/~phytolbalcan/PDF/17_2/contents.html - click the download link against 'New Floristic Records in the Balkans' to open another PDF and scroll to Page 258, this time labelled subsp *balcanicum*, for a paler coloured form.

There does not seem to be good photos for *E. absinthoides* (*sens. strict*) or for *E. latifolium*

The “*Pelargonium parviflorum*” complex

David Victor

I find this, still, a most confusing area. There are clearly many plants in South Africa that are part of section *Otidia*, are clearly linked into a sub-group of that section and all have petals shorter than their sepals. Twenty years ago, perhaps even ten years ago, we would have happily called them *P. parviflorum* or, perhaps, *P. rotundipetalum*.

In the intervening period, the two attempts have been made to rationalise these plants taxonomically. Firstly, Becker & Albers at Münster produced their initial paper “*Was ist Pelargonium parviflorum?*”¹ as a precursor of what had been intended as a two-part paper entitled “*Taxonomy and phylogeny of two subgroups of Pelargonium section Otidia (Geraniaceae)*”², the first part of which was published in 2009. However, Dr Becker’s contract expired at Munster University and he moved to New Zealand before publication of the second part of the paper was agreed, so it was not

and has not since been published. That part of the paper had been meant to provide the detailed evidence and analysis that was only dealt with in overview in the original *Avonia* paper. As a result, there were many questions without answers.

As we all know, in recent years, Richard Clifton has been attempting to answer those unanswered questions with his review work on section *Otidia*. While some of this has been published in this newsletter, he has also published one *Associated Note*³ specifically about this area and, more recently, his overall revision. However, in this work he has been constrained by lack of access to the material involved with the Becker & Albers work, as well as to the two authors, one of whom was in New Zealand and the other had since long retired.

I hesitated to repeat this history, but felt that it was necessary before writing the rest of this note. Like many of you, I have a number of plants that fall into that original unstructured group mentioned in the opening paragraph of this piece. What is more, a number of them are not easily integrated with the work done in the papers referred. However, as I intend to include seed from some of them in this year's seed exchange, I thought that it might be helpful to you to know of the plants before-hand.

The first of these goes under my accession number of GE3137 as shown on the photos. I grew this from seed that came from our member Mary Hoogvliet. While she did not collect it herself, she says that it was collected from Alexanders Bay, in the north-west corner of South Africa. While the sepals fold back, I think that you can see that they are longer than the petals.

The second has the accession number GE3628. I collected this from a sandy roadside bank, on the road from Port Nolloth to Kamieskroon. In this example, the petals are almost as long as the sepals.

The third example is from the other end of the spectrum, with petals that are much shorter than the sepals. There are a number of these growing in the well-known succulent nursery at Vanrhynsdorp. I was told by the late owner of that nursery that he had collected these in the meadows to the west of the Cederberg. Katya Kotskaya and I found very similar examples a little further south, to the west of Kamieskroon. Here they are represented by accession number GE4396.

The last example was referenced in Richard Clifton's *Associated Note* 80³ page 20, where he describes it as: "trunk short, barrel-shaped, with short thick branches at tip; main stem leaves very long, to 30 or 40 cms, held upright not horizontal, pseudo-pinnate, the leaflets, pinnatifid and nearly linearly lobed. Inflorescence not seen." He goes on to say that he considers it "one segregate of *Avonia* Var. 4". In this case, the petals are distinctly shorter than the sepals. Perhaps more importantly, unlike the others mentioned here, the petals are a pale yellow, rather than white. It came to me as MV6822, which makes it a collection by the late Mike Vassar. Richard reports⁴

that it was collected at Platbakkies, to the east of the Kamiesberg, and that it might be a member of the Type sub-species.

There is one other example which might be grouped with the above. This is a plant that again was grown from seed that came to me from Mary Hoogvliet. She got her plant from Professor Albers in Münster and said it was the plant that he had named in his paper⁵ as *P. dasycaulon*. As can be seen, another example where the petals are just a little shorter than the sepals.

One other similarity between this group of plants is that they all have a tight "ball" of flowers, created by short pedicels and hypanthia. For the moment, I am not clear where they fit into the taxonomy, so will continue to call them *P. parviflorum*, which is perhaps inaccurate, but sufficiently indicative for me.

¹ "Was ist *Pelargonium parviflorum*?" Becker & Albers *Avonia* 23(2) (2005)

² "Taxonomy and phylogeny of two subgroups of *Pelargonium* section *Otidia* (*Geraniaceae*)" M. Becker & F. Albers *Bothalia* 39 (1) (2009)

³ "*P. section Otidia: Typification and verification notes for P. parviflorum & subspecies P. brevipetalum and P. rotundipetalum*" R. Clifton *Geraniaceae Group Associated Notes: no.80* (2015)

⁴ "Michael Vassar, Californian Plantsman – *Pelargonium* Seed Donation Notes" Richard Clifton *Geraniaceae Group Associated Notes: no 78* (2014)

⁵ "*Pelargonium dasycaulon – a forgotten species*" Albers & Becker *Kakteen und andere Sukkulente* 58 (9) (2007)

Member interview

Jan Miller, Scotland

*There is always a touch of whimsy about the choice of subjects for this part of our newsletter. This one was brought about by me receiving a membership cheque from Jan. It came with a note from her written on card carrying a beautiful image of *Monsonia vanderietiae* (or as many of us still refer to it, *Sarcocaulon vanderietiae*). My interest was also raised by the fact that it was marked as "Geraniaceae 5", implying that there were more where that one came from. So, I wrote to her and this is what I learnt. Ed.*

I am a resident of Perthshire and gained a Diploma in Botanical Illustration from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) in 2014, after a lifetime interest in illustrating plants. Like so many people who love plants, I have also had a completely different career, in my case as a social worker. I also have a lovely but ever-increasingly large family.

Since completing the RBGE Diploma course I dedicate at least part of every week to botanical illustration, exhibiting at the ESBA (Edinburgh Society of Botanical Artists,

www.esba.org.uk) annual exhibition and with a local group of Perthshire artists at The Bield at Blackruthven near Perth. I am also the secretary of ESBA.

This year I also exhibited at the annual BISCOT exhibition where I gained a bronze medal for my *Geraniaceae* series of paintings. That may not sound amazing when there are some humbling and fantastic artists (including Billy Showell who gained best in show and a gold medal for her *Iris/Iridaceae* paintings) but for me it was quite an achievement. BISCOT, *Botanical Images Scotia*, is an annual, juried botanical art exhibition held in conjunction with the *Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society* (RCHS) and the *Royal Botanical Garden, Edinburgh* (RBGE).

I came to painting not as an artist but through a love of plants. I find painting them a joy and an excuse to spend many hours in their company. I also hold an RBGE Certificate in Field Botany, gained in Belize, and have painted with an international group of illustrators on a boat on the Amazon in the footsteps of the renowned artist Margaret Mee, both wonderful experiences.

As for the *Geraniaceae*, I think they found me. I have always loved the wild British members of the family, *Geranium robertianum*/Herb Robert, *Geranium pratense*/Meadow Cranesbill, *Erodium cicutarium* / Common Stork's-bill and many others, and I grow quite a few species of *Geraniaceae* in my small, partly shady Perthshire garden. They are so resilient and rewarding.

When I looked around for inspiration for a series of paintings there were plenty of *Geraniaceae* species to inspire me. I then became curious and was introduced to Gunnar Ovstebo, RBGE horticulturalist, who has immense skill and knowledge in relation to plants worldwide. He was able to show me *Sarcocaulon vanderietiae* and *Pelargonium insularis* growing there in the glasshouses at RBGE, two more *Geraniaceae* species to paint and so different from their British relatives. A friend, hearing of my interest, brought me a plant of *Geranium phaeum* 'Samobor' and here was another exciting plant to paint with its dark, dusky flowers and variegated leaves, with red, green and brown shades as they mature.

Although I do love plants of the *Geraniaceae* family they are not, of course, the only plants I'm obsessed with. I'm fascinated by most things that grow, with another special place reserved for members of the families *Orchidaceae* and *Iridaceae*, and for trees, I do love trees. Life is short, not enough time for everything, and so we have to make difficult choices, but at least whatever the choices made in the plant world they are bound to be interesting.

Continues page 17

The Erodium absinthoides Group

Ben Coultrop



This (to left) was taken at Wisley in 1996 and was labelled simply *E. absinthoides*. It certainly seems to fit the description for the true *E. absinthoides sens strictu* but I would have liked to see it in flower to be sure.

Taken (to right) at Wisley on 13th June 2000 and labelled *Erodium absinthoides* Blue Form. While it is not flowering, the leaves look right for *E. armenum*, and match the pictures in the link in my piece, so this is probably *E. armenum*.



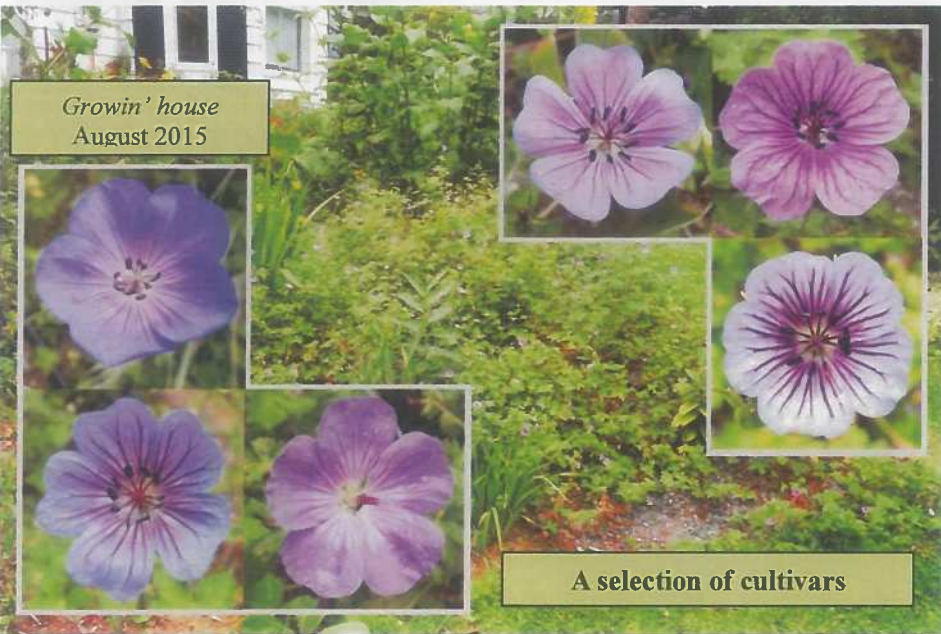
Pelargonium althaeoides

David Victor



Reverse

The "Wally" hill
John Beaulieu

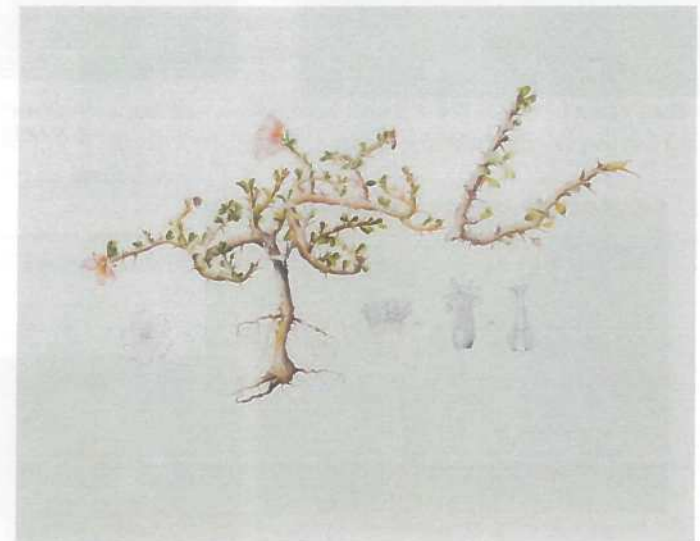


The Geraniaceae Series
Jan Miller

Right – *Pelargonium insularis*
Ex Socotra

Below –
Sarcocaulon vanderietiae

(All rights reserved to artist
Photos courtesy of Fraser Band)



The *Pelargonium parviflorum* complex

David Victor



GE3137



GE3628



GE2595



GE4396



GE3195 - "P. dasycaulon"



Continued from page 12

The Geraniaceae Series – Jan Miller

All the plants in my *Geraniaceae* series of paintings are native in some part of the world and, though very diverse in appearance, belong to the *Geraniaceae* family. The plants are:

1. ***Geranium phaeum* 'Samobor' – Samobor Dusky Cranesbill** (Croatia)
Whilst Croatia is the native country of this plant, it is widely cultivated for its colourful flowers and beautiful variegated leaves.
2. ***Pelargonium insularis*** (Socotra, Yemen)
This exceedingly rare and red listed *Pelargonium* has been found to grow wild in only one location in the world, the island of Samha in the Socotra Archipelago 300 miles off the coast of Yemen.
3. ***Sarcocaulon vanderietiae*** (South Africa)
This plant, a native of South Africa, looks very different from European members of the *Geraniaceae* family with its thorns and small, simple, heart-shaped leaves.
4. ***Geranium robertianum* – Herb Robert** (UK and many parts of the world)
This small-flowered member of the genus *Geranium* is like an old friend who is always appearing at unexpected times in unexpected places.
5. ***Erodium cicutarium* – Common Stork's-bill** (UK and many parts of the world). This plant was found in Aberdeenshire and was painted for its beauty and accessibility.

If you would like to purchase some of these, as cards, you can obtain them by contacting her on: "Jan Miller" jananmill@btinternet.com All rights are reserved to her.

Wild Geranium Cultivars

David Victor

Continuing my theme of the past few issues concerning the loss of introduced species, I thought that I would look at plants that have been introduced from the wild and given a cultivar name. Lest you think that I am spending too much time and space on such issues, let me start by reminding you that things are getting tougher for those of us who are interested in wild material and species plants. Since the Second World War we have lived through a period of massively growing access to such material. Political barriers have crashed down, so that access to places such as Central Asia and

China has become increasingly easy, professional collectors have travelled far and wide to satisfy a fast-growing consumer market for exotic plants and there has been a massive increase in travelling and tourism. As a result, we have been able to buy material of just about anything that we wanted.

However, that situation is rapidly changing. In part this is because of the increasing protection that is being developed to protect our flora, both native and exotic, from pests and diseases introduced by imported material. Clearly, a great deal of damage has been caused to many important plant genera by newly arrived insect pests and diseases, the numbers of which are increasing with increased international trade and tourism. Governments are duty bound to respond to these threats, though their responses are sometimes rather "over the top".

In parallel, the screws are being increasingly tightened on the exchange of material between the wild sources and individual enthusiasts, mainly as a result of the CITES treaties and their associated bureaucracies. The gates between botanical gardens and the enthusiasts, which used to be open, in both directions, for collected material are now firmly closed: It may be that matters less each year as the botanists of the past are increasingly replaced by the plant scientists of today, with subsequent reductions in living collections. Field collecting, whether by professional collectors or keen amateurs is massively frowned upon, with collecting licences becoming very difficult to obtain and increasing barriers at frontiers. Some countries already totally ban the import of seed and other material of non-native species and in other regions bureaucracies are working towards similar barriers.

It is against that background that I raise this issue once again. Over the past fifty years there has been an enormous influx of collected material which has both greatly enhanced our collections and extended the base of material available for breeding new, exciting cultivars. The thrust of our group has primarily been the first of these two: enhancing the range of plants that we grow.

I have been growing species Geraniums for over thirty years and over that time my life has been greatly enriched by new introductions. In the mid-1980's the number of species available was very limited and had changed little since the early part of the century and those that were available were often wrongly named or hybridised. Since then we have seen more and more species entering cultivation, more nurseries offering them and more material available by which they can be identified. However, I fear that pattern is changing. The doors are closing to new entries and, more particularly, new variants of existing species and those that have been brought into cultivation over the past decades are starting to disappear.

One of the ways in which we can protect this situation is by highlighting and protecting cultivated versions of wild plants i.e. by turning them into properly named cultivars. However, by itself that is not enough. We also need to ensure that plants that we have dealt with in that way are properly "maintained". What I mean by this is that we only propagate them by vegetative means, such as divisions or cuttings, and keep them properly identified, both on paper and on the plant. While such activities might be a little onerous, there is a Gresham's Law, that "bad money drives out good", which applies to plants, whereby "bad plants drive out good".

Over the years, a significant number of introductions have been treated as cultivars in this way, though I fear less have been maintained properly. Looking through the *Register of Geranium Cultivars* I have noted over seventy of them, though I believe that a number have disappeared without trace.

I'm pleased to say that I still have some of them, which I believe that I have maintained well, even through the major trauma of removal from Bedfordshire to Somerset. They include a number of plants that I hope never to lose:

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| G. 'Derrick Cook' | A strong-growing and spreading, white form of <i>G. himalayense</i> named after its collector, who collected it near Narang, Nepal in 1984. |
| G. 'Greek Fire' | A red-flowered form of <i>G. sylvaticum</i> collected by Nick Turland, a botanist now at the Free University, Berlin, in northern Italy. |
| G. 'White Zigana' | A white form of <i>G. ibericum</i> var. <i>jubatum</i> collected by Michael Baron at the Zigana Pass in Turkey. |
| G. 'Zetterlund' | A fine form of <i>G. renardii</i> collected by Henrik Zetterlund of Gothenburg Botanic Garden on Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus. |

There are a number of others that I have had in the past, but which had to be left behind when I moved to a house with a rather smaller garden a few years ago. I particularly remember G. 'White-Ness', the beautiful white form of *G. macrorrhizum* found by Ness Botanic Gardens on Mount Pindus in Greece. There was also a very good example of *G. himalayense*, called 'Spiti Valley', named after the place where Alistair McKelvie collected it in Pakistan: it had bright blue flowers with pink veining and a white centre.

Perhaps just as importantly, there are a number that I have seen, but never found for sale. Two that I particularly liked were found by the same collector, Andy Byfield, in meadows in north-eastern Turkey and introduced at the *Royal Horticultural Society*

Trials, stage 2, without names. These were unusual forms of *G. psilostemon*. The first was later named *G. 'Rosefinch'* and was described as being "...paler than any selection currently in cultivation and has faint greyish shading in place of the black eye; the flowers are about 40mm across." The second was later named *G. 'Snowfinch'* and was described as "...forming a large plant, relatively late blooming with pure white flowers, lacking either a dark eye or veins, to about 45 mm across."

The Wally Hill

John Beaulieu, Canada

When I first got really hooked on the hardy geraniums, the addiction was really fuelled by a couple of hobbyists in the UK. They had sent me plant material of species and hybrids that I would never find here in Ontario. This was before I had discovered the *Geraniaceae* Group and other clubs with amazing seed distributions. One of these people, Annette Cutts, insisted that I should try the *G. wallichianum*s since they were her favourites, and she sent me seed of several forms. I was amazed by the variety of colour that showed up in the seedlings.

About that time, there were hybrids showing up at local garden centres, such as 'Jolly Bee', 'Sweet Heidi', and 'Azzuro'. As a true *Geranium* addict, you know I could not pass any up! Eventually through the seed distributions I got hold of several Chris Chadwell collections from the wild. Needless to say, I had different *G. wallichianum* tucked in many locations around the garden. I was also finding that the name can be quite a mouthfull, especially when talking to general gardeners, so I simply started referring to them as 'Wallys'. I was getting to the point where my Wallys needed to be better organized.

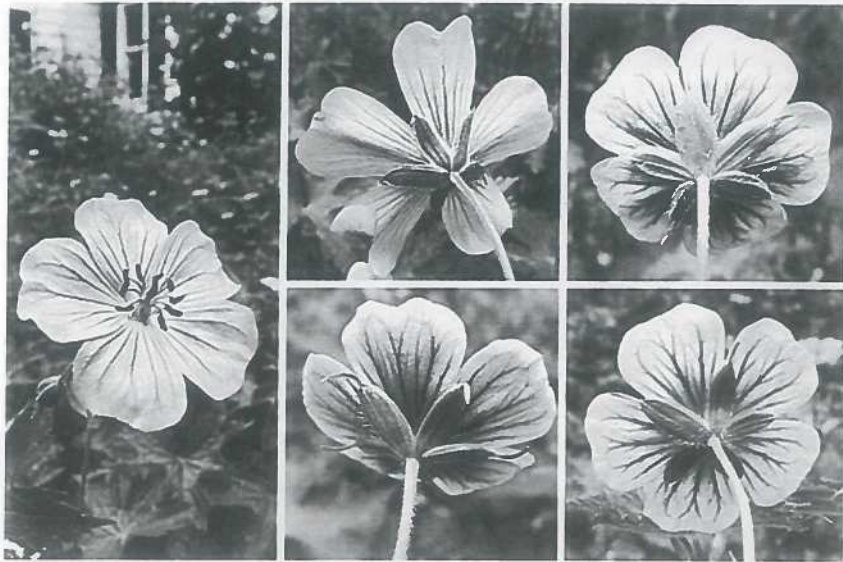
In 2013, I created a hill (really just a small mound) for my collection of *Geranium wallichianum*s which were scattered around the yard in various locations. It was the middle of a hot summer (not the best time for moving plants) but they all seemed to survive just fine, with one exception. Some plants I have had for a few years and others were seedlings from the various seed exchanges.

I read that they are a very variable species in the wild, and within the same patch you can find variations that are similar to most named cultivars that are available in the trade. So I was not worried about keeping varieties apart. I was looking forward to what the bees might create for me! (See David Victor's *Geranium wallichianum* posting from February, 2013 in the *Geraniaceae Group Forum*)



The location had previously been a mound in which I plunged pots of *Sinningias* (*Gesneriads*) for the summer, removing them in the fall for winter storage of the dormant tubers. It was getting over-run with grass and weeds and my interests were changing from the non-hardy *Gesneriads* (a 35 year interest) to hardy geraniums. I dug up the sod and covered the mound with a lot of newspaper to smother the grass and weeds. This was covered with some wood chip mulch and then a final topping of a grey construction gravel. I used some of our underlying sand to edge the mound and make weeding easy. I eventually found some matching rocks to add, helping the mound have a more natural scree appearance. The gravel allows moisture to get right down to the top-soil below, preventing erosion and controlling weed growth.

The plants all seemed to like the move, and did really well the next year. In mid-August most were in peak bloom. One of the first to bloom that summer was 'Jolly Bee'. It seems to me that 'Jolly Bee' is different from 'Rozanne', even though the powers to be declare that they are the same plant. To the eye, the blooms look the same, but my camera always sees them different. For me, 'Rozanne' starts blooming later. Of course there is always the chance with any *Geranium* here in Canada, that we may not have the true form.



Lots of interesting seedlings were produced from crosses on the hill, but I also noted that *G. wallichianum* is a species that also has incredible backs to the flowers... I even had a few that had more vivid backs than the colour displayed on the front of the flower... Fun!

Many garden centres in Ontario are carrying fewer geraniums. They say that they do not look good in pots over the season. When they are out of flower, they look weedy to most folks. Some get too tall in their pots and others scramble into other pots. Well, if this is true, 'Azure Rush' is a good example of one spreading and tangling with the pots beside it! 'Azure Rush' was my only winter loss on the 'Wally hill' (2015-16 was longest coldest winter in 30 years), but I bought another to give it a second chance. I had a heck of a time lifting just one from the tangle at the garden centre (see photo). For the second year they are one of the most popular geraniums right after 'Rozanne', which is funny as they really appear as a paler form of 'Rozanne'.



Last summer was the hottest and driest since records were kept for this area. This proved to be harder on plants than any extreme cold winter. Our shallow well was so low, that I could not do a lot of watering, and I was afraid that I might have lost many of the Wallys, as they shrivelled back and many vanished from sight! Well, they were a lot tougher than I thought, as this spring they all appeared on the hill again. They were not as lush as previous, but they survived, and I'm sure that this spring and summers record rainfall will have the Wally hill back to its previous glory.

Pelargonium althaeoides

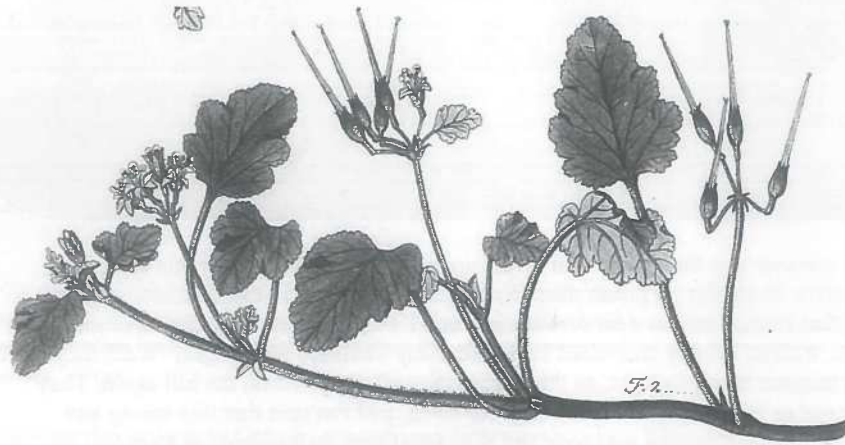
David Victor

Over the past few years I have built up a small collection of annual and short-lived Pelargoniums. They are not, in any sense, spectacular plants. However, all of them have a charm of their own and take little room in the greenhouse. In the course of growing them, I have also become aware that their flowers, although sometimes minute, sometimes have an attraction seldom found elsewhere in the genus.

I'm not totally sure what started my interest in this area, though I have a suspicion that it was a small plant that I found on the Packhuis Pass a few years ago. At the time I was totally baffled: I had not seen anything quite like it before and found it difficult to obtain information about this type of Pelargonium. The one thing that stuck in my mind was the bright red reverses to the petals. In retrospect, it may well have been a

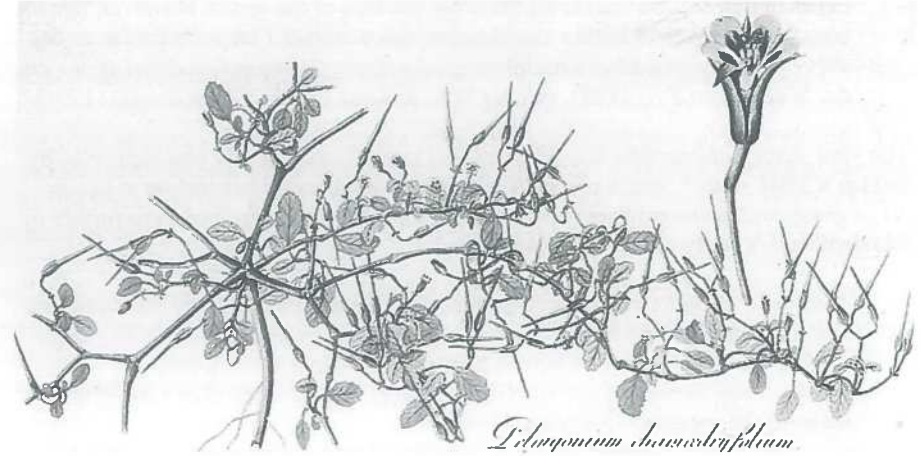
plant of this species that I saw and, if so, it is the only one that I ever have seen in nature.

The specific epithet "*althaeoides*" is derived from the Greek *althaea*, meaning mallow, as in *Althaea officinalis*, the "marshmallow" and, with the suffix "-oides", meaning that it looks like a mallow. I assume that it was given this name as both this species and its namesake are covered in down, or soft hair. The plant was originally named by Linnaeus as *Geranium althaeoides* in "*Species plantarum*" p. 679 (1753). The name was brought into *Pelargonium* by Aiton's publications of l'Heritier's work in "*Hortus Kewensis*" v. II p. 420 (1789). The first illustrated description of the species was published by Baron Jacquin in his "*Collectanea*" v.IV (1790), using the name *Pelargonium althaeoides*.



P. althaeoides - Jacquin N J "*Collectanea Austriaca*" v.4 p. 185 t.21(2) (1790)

P. althaeoides was initially placed in section *Peristera* by de Candolle when he introduced the section in 1824, the section being typified by small annual plants with five fertile stamens. In 1836 Ecklon and Zeyher raised the section to genus level, with this species becoming *Peristera althaeoides*. However, Harvey in "*Flora Capensis*" (1860) reduced the genus to a Section once again, with this species returning to *P. althaeoides*. Knuth in "*Das Pflanzenreich*" (1912) maintains the same analysis.



P. chamaedryfolium - Jacquin N J "*Icones Plantarum Rariorum*" v3 t.523 (1794)

Soon after publishing his description of *P. althaeoides* in "*Collectanea*", Jacquin published *Pelargonium chamaedryfolium* in his "*Icones Plantarum Rariorum*" v.3 t.523 (1794); that is the *Pelargonium* with leaves similar to those of *Teucrium chamaedrys*, the "wall germander". Both of these were carried through the various revisions shown above without question. However, in recent years questions have been raised as to whether or not there are two separate species. Jacquin's published illustrations and descriptions are so similar that they appear synonymous and that is supported by herbarium and evidence from the field. It is now thought that there is only the one species, with priority being given to *P. althaeoides*.

During the major investigations into *Pelargonium* carried out by Prof. van der Walt and his colleagues, little was published regarding section *Peristera* or its species, apart from some minor papers. However, the subject was taken up by one of Prof. Albers students, Dorothea Hellbrügge, whose Doctoral thesis consisted of a revision of the section, spreading over more than 400 pages and including detailed descriptions and illustrations of all of the species based on living and herbarium material. Her main study was based on extensive field work in South Africa, where she worked with the main team, as well as a major field trip through Australia with Prof. Albers. While the thesis was not published it is available in the library of Münster University.

Having studied *P. althaeoides* and section *Peristera* in detail, she was convinced that *P. althaeoides* should be removed from the section and transferred to section *Campylia*. Although she suggested the changes that would need to be made to the definition of section *Campylia* to accommodate this move, she did not formally propose it as, in her words:

"*P. althaeoides*..is transferred to section *Campylia* because a closer relationship exists to that section than to all the other sections of the genus. However, this transfer still requires further clarification, since section *Campylia* proves to be very heterogeneous from a morphological and phytochemical point of view (van der Walt & van Zyl (1988), van der Walt & Roux (1991), Marschewski (1995))."

The view that *P. althaeoides* should be moved to section *Campylia* was supported by Bakker's 2004 study*, which placed it with other members of that section in Clade A1, a group with a chromosome count of X = 10. This was supported even further by Röschenbleck's study of 2014** which showed:

"Section *Campylia* including *P. althaeoides* .. represents a clearly monophyletic clade with highest support within clade A. The transfer of *P. althaeoides* to section *Campylia* indicated here is additionally supported by a basic chromosome number of x = 10 (Gibby et al. (1996), Bakker et al. (2004) and shape of the mericarp Hellbrügge 1997)."

P. althaeoides is an annual or short-lived perennial mostly found exploiting vacant spaces, in particular areas recently cleared by fires, which provide good nutrition and little vegetative competition. It grows up to heights of 1,250 metres, in fynbos. It is restricted to the south-western part of South Africa to the west of the 20 degree meridian and to the south of the 32 degree parallel.

Plants are sprawling and low-growing, with longish stems, the whole plant quite hairy. They have a short tap-root, basal leaves that are ovate to elliptical, with rounded tips, shallow lobes and marginally toothed. The foliage has a distinct musty lemon smell. Flowers are on a peduncle bearing 5-6 flowers. The flowers themselves are small and in a tight head. Petals are pink, veined in blood-red. The dark red of the petal reverse is quite distinctive.

Lest the photographs in the centre pages and the long description here should persuade you that this is an exciting new species for your collection, I should add that the flowers are small. The upper two are 7-8.5 mm long by 1.5-2 mm wide, lanceolate, rounded; the anterior three are 5 mm long by 1 mm wide, spatulate, rounded, basally acute. However, they are quite striking if you are willing to take the time to admire them.

* "Phylogeny of *Pelargonium* (*Geraniaceae*) based on DNA sequences taken from three genomes" Freek T Bakker, Alistair Culham et al. *Taxon* 53(1) (2004)

** "Phylogenetics, character evolution and a subgeneric revision of the genus *Pelargonium* (*Geraniaceae*)" J. Röschenbleck, F. Albers et al. *Phytotaxa* 159 (2) 2014

Future development of the Group

David Victor

Many plant societies similar to ours are struggling and some have already closed. The model that such societies was based on for so many years is rapidly coming to the end of its life and those that in the past might have joined such groups are moving off to pastures new.

For many years the Group's operations revolved around meetings, the Newsletter, book sales and occasional Technical Notes. Whilst these have all served us well for over 30 years, some of them have probably outstayed their welcome and new ideas need to emerge and new opportunities grasped.

Over the past few years we have experimented with a number of new areas, some have been very successful, others not so successful. The use of PayPal has proven a success, both in terms of Members and those of us administering the Group's activities: Already, about half our payments arrive by this method. The Group on-line Forum started very well indeed, but has slowed to almost a stop now; not so good. However, we need to try these things out to see which ones work for us. The latest activity to be associated with us is the Facebook Group that has been set up by Matija Strlic, which is proving to be highly successful.

With these matters in mind, we are trying to arrange a meeting later this year to discuss such matters. We do not have a date set yet, but expect it to be in November. It will certainly be on a week-end and in London. Any Member is welcome to come and if you are interested please contact Matija on Facebook or me on my email as soon as you can. If you cannot come, we would still like to know your views. So, please let us have them via either of those contact points.

I should add that this meeting is a discussion and will not be a once and for all decision point. It is just that things are moving around us and we need to move with them: hopefully this will help us along that path.

Calendar for 2017

Although there are no meetings currently scheduled, we are considering holding a meeting later in the calendar year. Please see the previous page for information.

Publication dates and deadlines

Mailing of the Group News is due on the first day of each quarter i.e. 1st January, 1st April, 1st July, 1st October. Suggestions for articles are welcomed by the Editor at any time. The deadline for agreeing articles or news items for a particular issue is six weeks before the mailing date given above.

While material provided is generally used in the next Group News, the Editor reserves the right to decide the timing of its use. The Editor also reserves the right to judge both the suitability and content of all material submitted for publication.

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If you are interested in *Pelargonium* cultivars, why not visit the website of
The *Pelargonium & Geranium Society*, at

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