

# THE ROCK GARDEN 138



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January 2017

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# The Rock Garden

The Journal of the  
Scottish Rock Garden Club  
January 2017

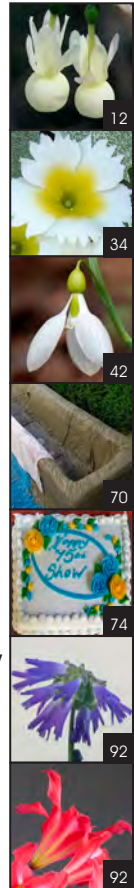
## Number 138

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**Cover:** Crown imperial, narcissi and auriculas; this image appears by special permission of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016; its reference is RCIN 924280

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The Editor welcomes articles, photographs and illustrations on any aspects of alpine and rock garden plants and their cultivation. Authors are encouraged to submit material electronically but articles may also be submitted in manuscript. Digital images are particularly welcome; high quality prints or drawings may also be submitted.

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The normal deadlines for contributions are 1<sup>st</sup> November for the January issue and 1<sup>st</sup> April for the July issue. These dates also apply for material for the Yearbook and Show Schedules.

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# Alexander Marshal and The Art Of The Garden

Issue 138:  
The Cover

Vanessa Remington

The work of Alexander Marshal (c. 1620-82) is commemorated in the Royal Collection Trust's exhibition entitled *Painting Paradise: The Art of The Garden* at The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh until 26 February 2017. Marshal produced the only surviving example of a seventeenth-century English flower-book (or 'florilegium'). His great work, painstakingly completed over at least three decades, amounts to a personal archive, for Marshal was not a professional artist but a well-connected gentleman-amateur with a passionate interest in plants. In 1653, Marshal was offered and refused 300 pieces of gold for his flower-book, which became his lifetime's work. He left as his legacy an exquisite visual record of the plants in cultivation in some of the most important and exciting gardens of his generation.

Marshal maintained two gardens of his own, one in Islington, North London, and the other in Northamptonshire, possibly at Castle Ashby, the seat of James Compton, 3rd Earl of Northampton (1622-81). But it was from the gardens of his friends John Tradescant the Younger (1608-62) at Lambeth in London, and Henry Compton, Bishop of London (1631/2-1713) at Fulham Palace, that he must have drawn the richest inspiration for his volume of watercolours. The earliest record of

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<https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/924344/spiderwort-tradescantia-virginiana-l-with-an-unnamed-snail-family-helicidae>

Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*), a snail, an unidentified rose called 'the Ragatte Rose', *Nigella hispanica* and Love-in-a-mist, double form). (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016)

Marshal shows him living in Lambeth with John Tradescant the Younger in 1641, and he is known to have completed a flower-book for his friend, depicting 'the choicest Flowers and Plants' in the South London garden. One of the folios on display in Edinburgh (RCIN 924344) shows one of John Tradescant the Elder's introductions from Virginia. Spiderwort (*Tradescantia virginiana*) was grown in England for the first time by the elder Tradescant, although it had been known in Europe since the previous century. Marshal included pink- and purple-flowering specimens, combined in an informal arrangement on the same sheet, with two other new introductions: Spanish Love-in-a-mist (*Nigella hispanica*), first described at Droxford, near Petersfield, Hampshire in 1621 by the botanist John Goodyear (c. 1592-1664); and a double form of Love-in-a-mist (*Nigella damascena* 'Flore Pleno'), which was already growing in English gardens by 1578.

Although native species such as the Sweet Briar (*Rosa rubiginosa*) or Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*) appear in Marshal's flower-book, it is the new varieties beloved by seventeenth-century florists and plant-hunters that dominate his work. Among its pages are included 60 tulips, 60 carnations and 38 auriculas, reflecting the particular fascination that these exotic new species held for Marshal and his contemporaries. Side-by-side in Edinburgh are two folios which depict highly-prized auriculas. The first folio (RCIN 924280) shows two diminutive examples beneath a towering Crown Imperial (*Fritillaria imperialis* - see the cover of this issue). The Crown Imperial was introduced to Vienna from Constantinople in 1576 and was named after the imperial gardens where it was first grown. On the second sheet are fourteen stems of the naturally occurring *Auricula* hybrid. The example in the top left-hand corner shows a rare double-striped flower. The Reverend Samuel Gilbert, writing in *The Florist's Vade Mecum* (1682), called two similar double-striped auriculas 'the two choicest rarities in *Flora's* cabinet'. Many of the flowers shown on this sheet have either notched or pointed petals and are thrum-eyed. Only four have pin-eyed tubes. The leaves also vary, with most being either dentate or slightly serrate.

Possibly the most remarkable of any of Marshal's paintings is the unnamed tulip on folio 36 (RCIN 924303) of Marshal's flower-book. It demonstrates the particular interest of seventeenth-century plantsmen in an attribute of the tulip that was not fully understood at the time but which was ruthlessly pursued by plant connoisseurs – the 'flamed' appearance of the petals which took on intricate striped patterns. The phenomenon is caused by a virus spread by aphids, and plants endowed with this feature were valued even more highly than the norm. Tulips had become extremely valuable since their first appearance in Europe. They were introduced from Constantinople in 1559 by the imperial ambassador at the Ottoman court and the fashion for growing them spread quickly. The first tulips were grown in England in about 1578, when an apothecary named James

Garret managed to propagate tulips at his garden near Aldgate in the City of London. Soon, the inflated value of tulips put them out of reach to all except the wealthy, and speculation on the plants became feverish in Holland in 1637, leading ultimately to the financial ruin of many investors. Marshal captures the devastating allure of this fascinating plant in his extraordinary depiction of it here.

Marshal follows the seasons in the organisation of his flower-book, beginning with the flowers of spring and following the seasons of the year. The arrangement of his specimens on the page feels uncontrived and informal, and, in common with many Dutch floral still-life painters, Marshal painted his specimens as he found them. They are often imperfect, with petals or flower-heads shown dropped from the stems, or with blemishes visible on leaves or petals. These features give Marshal's images an acute sense of realism and persuade us of the accuracy of his observation.

As an observer of the garden plants of mid-seventeenth century England, Marshal is unequalled. Although a self-taught amateur, his skills rank with those of professional contemporaries abroad, such as Nicolas Robert (1614-85), a botanical artist who executed a series of botanical paintings on vellum for Louis XIV. Through his network of leading plantsman-friends, Marshal had access to the most beautiful, most exotic and most highly-treasured plants being grown in England at the time, and in the pages of his flower-book we too can enjoy these spectacular specimens over three hundred and fifty years later.

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[https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/  
collection/924281/auriculas-primula-x-  
pubescens](https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/924281/auriculas-primula-x-pubescens)

Auriculas (*Primula x pubescens*) were very popular in the 17th century. Those with striped and notched petals were only grown in the finest gardens, and striped and double varieties such top left were particularly highly prized. (Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2016)

# The SRGC Snowdrop Day 2017

Ian Christie

We have set the date of Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2017 for our club's Snowdrop Day. Thirty members (only) are invited to meet at Westmuir hall at 10 o'clock in the morning for a programme that will include a presentation by Matt Bishop, a visit to Brechin Castle to see special snowdrops, lunch at the Castle's garden centre (under £10, or bring your own lunch). We will then travel on to Maulsden to view the special colony of *Galanthus plicatus* and take a walk around a million or more *Galanthus nivalis*. The cost per member is around £15 and we will provide coffee and tea at the hall. For any further details please contact [ianchristie@btconnect.com](mailto:ianchristie@btconnect.com)





## The David Boyd Events

### *Growing Rock Garden Plants: From the Ground Upwards*

Grant Arms Hotel, Granttown-on-Spey, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Thanks to a generous bequest by the late David Boyd, the SRGC is organizing a series of out-reach events, to take place over coming years. The first of these will be in Granttown-on-Spey. The talks at this event will be on a practical 'club' level, will be open to both local gardeners and members of the SRGC, and the event is something that members of the Moray and Highland Rock Garden Clubs may particularly enjoy. There will be five speakers all talking on practical elements of rock gardening, with 5 to 10 minutes for questions at the end of each session and with a longer open question time at the end of the fifth talk.

The cost for the day is £12.50 to cover teas, coffees, soup and sandwiches and this payment can be made on the day. The David Boyd Bequest covers all other costs for the event. Things will start at 09:45 with registration along with tea and coffee, and will end with tea and coffee at 16:00. Neil Huntley from Hartside Nursery, Ian Christie, and Susan Band of Pitcairn Alpines will all have stalls to sell plants. Space in the Osprey Suite at the Grant Arms is limited to 70 people so if you are interested in attending or would like more information either phone me on 01309 641405 or email me at [findhorncarol@icloud.com](mailto:findhorncarol@icloud.com)

Carol Shaw

## Programme

- 09:45 Registration, tea coffee
  - 10:15 *Growing Alpines in Inhospitable Places*  
Neil Huntley
  - 11:10 *Basic Needs of Growing Alpine Plants*  
Ian Christie
  - 12:00 Lunch
  - 13:00 *Designing a Rock Garden*  
Carole Bainbridge
  - 13:50 *Bulbs in the Rock Garden*  
Susan Band
  - 14:40 Comfort break
  - 14:50 *Growing Rock Garden Plants in Containers*  
Ian Bainbridge
  - 15:40 Open question time
  - 16:00 Tea, coffee and depart
- David Boyd with his *Nerine humilis*



# Discussion Weekend 2017

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> October

After the delights of the Scottish Borders discussion weekend in 2016, we invite you back to Peeblesshire for the 2017 event at the Cardrona Hotel, a modern building in grounds by the River Tweed between the historic towns of Peebles and Innerleithen. With views of the Border Hills, this four-star hotel offers spacious and comfortable accommodation, an award-winning restaurant, an 18 hole golf course and a spa.

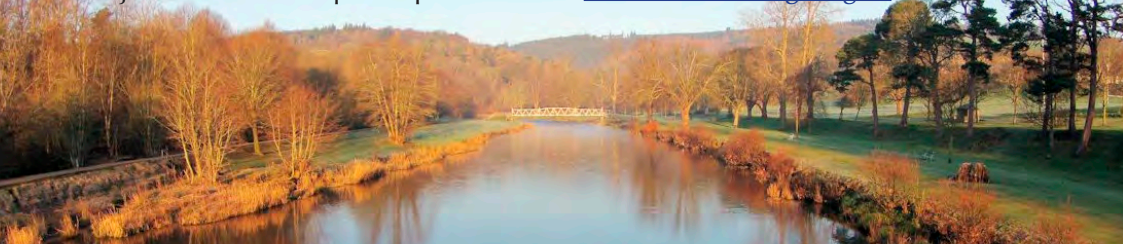
The Borders has outstanding natural beauty with a wonderful array of things to see and do. Ruined castles are set amongst rolling hills, and Peebles itself is a Royal Burgh of unspoilt character. Stroll through its mediaeval alleyways or follow its riverside walkways. A visit to the Royal Botanic Garden's satellite garden at Dawyck promises magnificent trees and autumn colour while privately-owned Kailzie Gardens, two and a half miles out of Peebles, described as a large domestic garden on a grand scale, offers colour and charm in its walled and woodland gardens. Historic buildings abound: Traquair House, one of the oldest houses in Scotland (seven miles from Peebles) is worth a visit and houses a privately run brewery. Another piece of history, ancient Neidpath Castle, lies on a bend in the River Tweed, just a mile's walk out of Peebles. For those who wish to stay longer, there is a wealth of other interesting possibilities within driving distance of the hotel.

## Programme

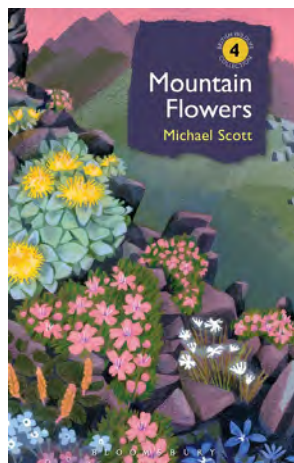
The programme follows that of previous years. On Friday afternoon, registration is followed by dinner and the evening lecture. Saturday morning allows time for the show, plant sales, garden visits or a venture to Peebles or Innerleithen, both in easy walking distance along the river. On Saturday afternoon we have three lectures followed by the evening's drinks reception, conference dinner and plant auction. On Sunday morning there will be two lectures followed by lunch, and on Sunday afternoon we have our final two lectures before tea and departure.

Our well-known speakers span the world for their presentations: travels by Harry Jans to far-flung Peru; Henrick Zetterlund's thirty years of growing alpines in Gothenburg; Martin Gardner on the conservation of conifers; Sid Clarke on a quest for European primulas; an insight into the Lauteret Alpine Garden in the French Alps from Jean-Gabriel Valay; years of bulb-growing experience from our introductory speaker Rod Leeds; later in the weekend there is Tony Hall's in-depth look at the intriguing junco irises.

Prices and a booking form are in the 2017 Year Book and Secretaries Pages. Final details will be published on the club website and in the July journal. For other queries please contact [e.mackintosh@rbge.org.uk](mailto:e.mackintosh@rbge.org.uk)



Mountain Flowers  
Michael Scott  
Bloomsbury  
ISBN 978-1-4729-2982-2  
Hardcover 416 pages



This lovely book is the fourth in the series called the *Bloomsbury Wildlife Collection*, following on the heels of *Mushrooms*, *Meadows and Rivers*. The volumes are clearly aimed at rivalling the long-established *New Naturalist* series, being similar in size and style. The four volumes all have expert authors, in this case well-respected Scottish botanist Michael Scott. Written in a colloquial and readable style, lavishly illustrated with hundreds of good quality colour photographs, this is an impressive work.

After four introductory chapters defining mountain plants, looking briefly at their origins and at the mountain ecological zones, the book takes an unconventional turn, in that the next thirteen chapters embark on a tour of British mountains from south to north. Each chapter reviews the status of mountain plants in the region concerned (such as the Southern Uplands or the Breadalbane Hills), and identifies the key mountain areas, their habitats and the plants living upon them. Around 150 plants receive 'portrait treatment', and twenty species are given 'extended profiles', usually of two or three pages, discussing their British status, their connections with the chapter in which they are embedded, and conservation issues that they face. This means that, unlike many semi-technical books, it was one I enjoyed reading chapter by chapter, though it is also easy to dive straight into the mountain ranges that interest you most.

This treatment nevertheless generates some difficulties. If your interest is in a particular species, you need to search the index – and the index only uses and references English names. The detailed index for the plant portraits is actually in the 'List of British mountain vascular plants' on pages 29-35, which is arranged by family and uses Latin names as well as English, so casual users may find the index frustrating. A minor beef is the exclusion of *Primula scotica* (considered a coastal, not mountain, plant); surely a coastal plant in 'mountain habitats'? That aside, the book is a mine of valuable information for anyone interested in British mountain flowers; buy it, read it, and you'll learn a great deal from a well-written and beautifully illustrated book.

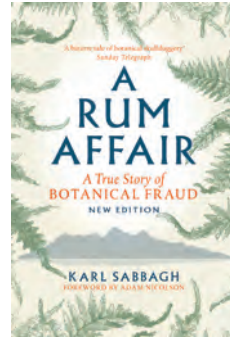
Ian Bainbridge

A Rum Affair:  
A True Story of Botanical Fraud  
Karl Sabbagh

Birlinn

ISBN 978-1-78027-386-0

Paperback 260 pages



Michael Scott's book makes a passing reference to 'an elaborate fraud' on Rum in the 1940s. This book provides the detail of the botanical fraud carried out by Professor John Heslop Harrison, ostensibly in support of his theories that some mountain plants survived the last Ice Age on the west coast of Scotland. Heslop Harrison claimed to have found several species new to Britain on Rum during trips with students from Newcastle University. The botanical establishment became suspicious of these claims and John Raven was sent to investigate. This intriguing book re-tells the story, which was never fully published at the time, and this new edition adds a degree of closure, with extra chapters detailing information contained in confidential documents held in the British Museum which the author learned about well after the original publication in 1999. The *dramatis personae* include a number of people involved in rock gardening past and present, including R B Cooke, W A Clark, Sir George Taylor and latterly Steven Blackmore. Raven's detective work, and the twists and turns of the documented aftermath of this work are well compiled by Karl Sabbagh, who draws a clear and fascinating thread through a complex and murky episode of British botany.

Ian Bainbridge

Xu Bo, Li Zhimin and Sun Hang  
Seed Plants of the Alpine Subnival Belt from the  
Hengduan Mountains, SW China

Science Press, Beijing (2014)

ISBN/ISSN: 9787030382535

Hardback 413 pages



This book adds substantially to the set of illustrated books about the high mountain flora of this area. It deals with 942 species of the Hengduan Mountains, loosely referring to the south-eastern Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Since the new and illustrated *Flora of China* became accessible online in English, it has been easy to identify almost any plant from the monsoon-influenced mountains of south-west China. But photographic guides to particular areas are not rendered obsolete by this; the richness of Sino-Himalayan mountain flora means there will probably never be enough

of these books. Species may be identified directly and quickly without identification keys or collecting herbarium specimens. Picture books also shed extra light on genera treated sometimes incompletely in the *Flora of China*. In this case, the illustrations cover 537 species and 649 species are mentioned in the distribution maps. Localities are mapped schematically with discs coloured according to species, showing only the main rivers, cities and administrative borders. Concise plant descriptions outline the overall habit (perennial, annual, woody), flower colour and flowering time. There follows a brief account of the occurrence and altitude range. The main part of each species text is a comprehensive description of distribution; many herbarium specimens and expeditions are cited, reaching from George Forrest's travels to the newest research projects. This careful quoting of collection data together with the distribution maps and a comprehensive general introduction to the book make for a welcome new aspect of illustrated flower books devoted to Chinese mountains and place the book usefully somewhere between scientific and popular literature.

There are novel and advantageous features. The text is bilingual, making the material more accessible than, say, Toshio Yoishida's *Himalayan Plants Illustrated*. The quality of pictures and printing is good, improving on the *Guide to the Flowers of Western China* (Grey-Wilson & Cribb, 2011) whose low printing quality detracted from its otherwise high value. The book has few or even no mistakes in identification, improving significantly on other publications. This accuracy owes to the acknowledged involvement of international specialists such as Michael G Pimenov (Apiaceae), Marcus Lidén (*Corydalis*) and Ikhsan Ali Al-Shehbaz (Brassicaceae). Some genera and families are treated briefly whereas others are dealt with more comprehensively (*Corydalis*, *Rhodiola*, *Saussurea*, *Lagotis*, genera of Brassicaceae). Species selection in some genera is sparse (*Primula*, *Androsace*), perhaps reflecting the availability of pictures.

It is almost impossible to find anything to complain about in this admirable work. One might quibble about the numerical basis of the statement that "Hengduan Mountains is home to probably the most abundant subnival flora in the world, boasting 942 species...", suspecting that the number should be considerably higher. A few high-altitude species (*Androsace*, *Primula*, *Pedicularis*) beloved of rock gardeners are incompletely covered above 4000 m. A few species are well-blessed with pictures; others with none. Issues such as sequencing of families and ranking of genera are in constant flux and will no doubt perplex future users of this and many other books.

Overall, this is an excellent doorway to this botanical El Dorado and is highly recommended to rock gardeners for buying from the Chinese publishers. The balance of text, pictures and maps is excellent, the quality of graphic layout and printing is very high. The authors and all who participated in this superb opus deserve our sincere congratulations.

Pavel Křivka

## Planting Design for Dry Gardens

Olivier Filippi

Filbert Press

ISBN 978-0-99338-920-7

Hardcover 240 pages

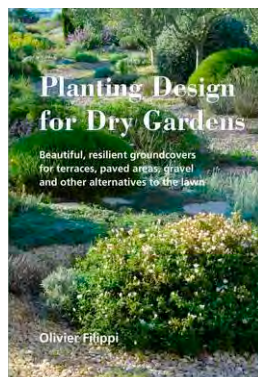
Olivier Filippi starts by questioning that traditional British icon – the Lawn. Many rock and alpine gardeners will sympathise. Those who regard the lawn as something to be tolerated or as a useful area to encroach on for new rocky, herbaceous or shrubby adventures, will welcome this book. Filippi outlines the history of the lawn and introduces other ways of covering dry ground, especially in Mediterranean zones. The second section exemplifies ten lines of attack, from the use of drought-resistant grasses that colour in winter, through rich meadows, to the most arid steppe and gravel areas that may be punctuated or decorated with wide sweeps and mounds of seasonal colour. Bulbs are not neglected, and stone-covering is covered (so to say). There are many fascinating asides that reveal much technical expertise and enthusiasm.

The third section deals with practical and important aspects of preparing ground, planting conditions and techniques. Anyone embarking on a dry garden is strongly advised to read this for its straightforward account of the real difficulties that lurk in the path of the dry gardener. Watering is thoroughly covered, with an emphasis on the crucial first year. Filippi gives a lot of attention to this, whether by hand or irrigation. His view is not just based on single species but is also coloured by the ways that species may be combined so that, for example, those plants needing summer water may co-exist with others that do not. His perspective on pests, diseases and “weeds” is modern and ecological, and keeps intrusion or interference to a minimum, aiming at minimal intervention. His thoughts on common Mediterranean species or those alien to the region are fascinating for their insights into the interplay of human activity and the ancient introductions of plants such as cypresses, figs, vines, mulberries, almonds and olives.

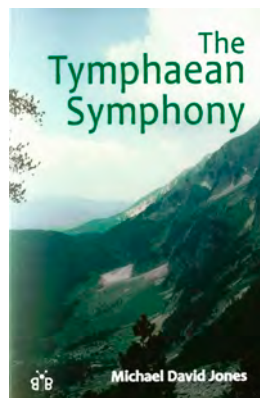
The book ends with about two hundred relevant plants, many illustrated and with notes on drought and frost resistance. The drought ratings might be useful to compare with, and to relate to, your own experience.

It may seem presumptuous of me to review this book, given our 700 mm rainfall here in central Scotland. Nevertheless, many of us dream of finding sunnier and warmer climes and this book is a wonderful spur to do so. With a focus on the Mediterranean region, it inspires and informs in equal measure. The printing quality is first-class, well and generously illustrated to show both detail and broad sweeps. I very much like the quality of translation from the original.

*Anton Edwards*



Michael David Jones  
The Tymphaean Symphony  
Brambleby Books  
ISBN 978 1908241 498  
Paperback 256 pages



**T**imfi (or Tymphe) is a mountain in the Pindus range in north-west Greece. In ancient times *Tymphaea* covered the surrounding area. *Tymphaean Symphony* is a synthesis of the author's wanderings across this awe-inspiring landscape, emphasising its natural history. It is an area little visited by outsiders – among whom we may include most of the population of other parts of Greece. John Richards's *Mountain Flower Walks: the Greek Mainland* ventures only tentatively into some of the fringes of the area.

This short book is not a guidebook; it is a travelogue in the very best tradition. You are left breathless at what the author has achieved and where he has been. He evokes well the majesty and grandeur of these mountains which are on a scale that cannot be found further south in Greece and the islands, even in Crete. He instils in me personally a feeling of profound regret that my own first-hand knowledge of this area is so limited, being confined to a brief few days almost thirty years ago.

There are detailed descriptions of the varied bird and butterfly life, together with other fauna. The rich and varied plant life is not pushed into the background but is given equal prominence. There is a wealth of information on the marvellous flowers, all complete with the full botanical name and English names where appropriate. There are interesting excursions into geology, history, prehistory and ethnography. It is a pity, though, that the mountain villages are not described in sufficient detail to emphasise how "un-Greek" they look, if your idea of Greece is what is normal further south.

The book is easy to read, although the prose is a bit dense in places. There is a multitude of Greek and Slavo-Greek place names, somewhat daunting if you are not *au fait* with the geography and history of the area, but they are handled with fluency and I only detected one howler: the consistent mis-spelling of the Khatsiou Bridge as the Xatsiou Bridge (owing to a mis-transliteration of the initial Greek letter chi as an X – a common error, as they look the same). The book is well produced and I found no misprints – a welcome contrast with some recent productions of the more august university presses. There is an excellent index containing all the species and place names. I was disappointed that there were no illustrations, except for the tantalising few on the front and back covers and the useful map inside the covers. In summary, if you want to visit a spectacular, fascinating and virtually unknown part of Europe, buy this book and read it. It is inspiring.

Michael J B Almond

# In the Footsteps of John W Blanchard

Matthew Topsfield

In March 1986, the world-renowned *Narcissus* expert John W Blanchard embarked with two of his sons upon a botanical study trip to south-eastern Spain. They visited numerous locations throughout Andalucía and Castilla-La Mancha with the aim of finding daffodils in the wild. This trip was detailed in his article '*Spanish Diary 1986*' in the RHS Daffodil Yearbook 1986-1987. I accidentally stumbled across this piece whilst using the Lindley Library at Wisley in January 2015 and the seeds of an idea for a research project germinated in me.

The Iberian Peninsula is the centre of diversity for the genus *Narcissus*. Increasingly, many species are facing pressure from both natural (climate change) and anthropogenic (development and land-use change) impacts. They are also a fast-evolving group with many naturally occurring hybrids, sometimes leading to the formation of new species. The aim of this project was to review the fortunes of known populations over the intervening three decades and to generate new data and insights into *Narcissus* in the wild.

In March 2016, I revisited the same sites that Blanchard was at some thirty years previously. Cross-referencing his article with further detail published in his book '*Narcissus: a guide to wild daffodils*' (1990) and information from others who have visited the region I was able to recreate his itinerary as closely as possible. I visited the sites during a similar period, arriving at Madrid airport on 23 March and departing on 01 April 2016, a slightly shorter trip than Blanchard's because of my work commitments.

*Narcissus triandrus* var. *cernuus* (Left) and *Narcissus triandrus* var. *concolor* (Right)





Hiring a car ensured that I could make the best use of my limited time, travelling 2379 kilometres in nine days. To retain as much flexibility as possible, especially given that the Easter holidays fell in the middle of my trip, I had a tent and basic camping gear. Seeking out the species and natural hybrids that Blanchard sought, I also collected my own incidental records of other species at those sites and others *en route*.

Waking up in Toledo refreshed and excited I hit the ground with my spirits high, in anticipation of finding plenty of *Narcissus*. However, it wasn't long before the feeling was dampened by my failure to find Blanchard's first two sites, where he had found *Narcissus triandrus*, jonquils and hybrids. Retracing my route, I was sure that the area must have undergone significant change, with smooth-surfaced, wide new roads and industrial agricultural practices evident. I did not relish spending what remained of my first day taking similar roads through more of the same countryside, so I decided to omit the third site (vaguely described as "roadsides *en route* to Almadén" where Blanchard had found variable *Narcissus bulbocodium*) from my own itinerary and instead took a cross-country route. This soon paid dividends; when stopping at a high road summit through the Parque Nacional de Cabañeros I found plenty of *Narcissus rupicola* flowering on the rocky cliff faces. A few pale-yellow *N. triandrus* var. *cernuus* were also by the roadside as well as the hybrid between these species, *Narcissus* x *rupidulus*. This is said to be a difficult plant to locate in the wild and only one was apparent here. *N. triandrus* occurred throughout the Parque Nacional, including occasional brighter yellow plants of var. *concolor*.

The next day I was set to explore every road radiating from Almadén, where Blanchard had been seeking a yellow trumpet described by Fernandez Casas as similar to *Narcissus obvallaris*. Blanchard failed to find

*Narcissus cantabricus*



it but, writing in *Narcissus: a Guide to Wild Daffodils* (1990), he says that “Michael Salmon found it in quantity after struggling up a hillside of very dense undergrowth”. My search focussed on the more natural and hilly areas but was also fruitless. I did find a dense colony of *N. cantabricus* ssp. *cantabricus*, mostly gone over but with a couple of late flowering plants.

Following the itinerary, the next location was a road between St. Eufemia and Conquista, which Blanchard found “was full of potholes: one of the worst we encountered”. Well, despite being a minor road it could not be more different today as it was one of the straightest and smoothest I drove on. Heading eastwards I could see what looked like the route of an older road weaving through the countryside. A changing landscape makes relocating plants and sites of interest very difficult and I drew another frustrating blank!

At this point, instead of directly following Blanchard’s route I decided to take a diversion towards Puertollano and then southwards to re-join the itinerary again at Andújar. Whilst this would eat into my time it allowed me to visit additional sites that I had been tipped off about. It turned out to be worthwhile, as that afternoon I found many *N. triandrus* (both var. *cernuus* and *concolor*) and more *N. cantabricus* in flower. However, the most exciting find was their very elegant hybrid *Narcissus* x *susannae*. Both parents are common throughout this region and this hybrid has been noted in this area for some time so it is likely to be well established and equally widespread. They are the most beautiful plants to find in the wild and offered ample reward for this detour.

The next day was to bring more natural hybrids. Soon after passing over the Sierra Madrona road summit, amongst a population of *Narcissus bulbocodium* ssp. *bulbocodium* and *N. triandrus* many *Narcissus* x *fosteri* (syn. *N. x rozeirae*) were in flower. The plants displayed some variation in the form and number of flowers and showed a high degree of hybrid vigour

*Narcissus triandrus* (Left) and its hybrid offspring *Narcissus* x *susannae* (Right)

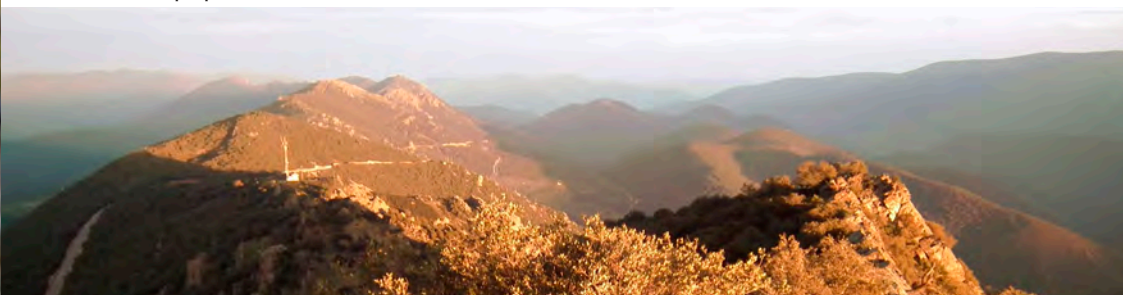


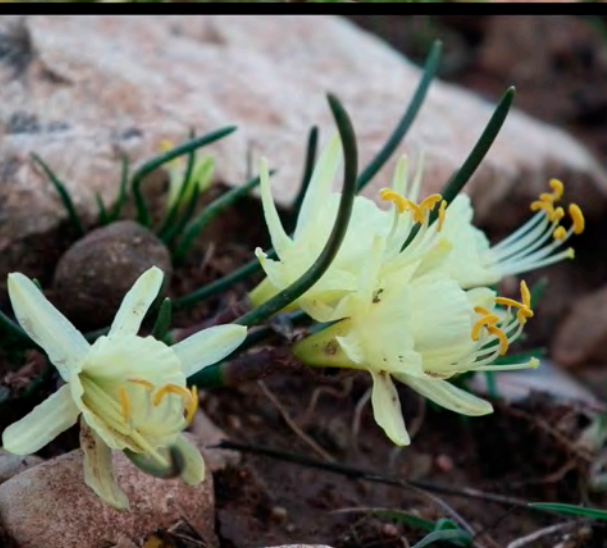


*Narcissus bulbocodium*

with all plants much more robust than either parent, and an exceptional individual bore a scape with three large blooms. The hybrids between Sections *Ganymedes* and *Bulbocodium* are very attractive plants (and I have found them to be vigorous in cultivation) but not all quite achieve the degree of elegance displayed in the best forms of *N. x susannae*.

A short way onward, and I found an extremely variable population of *N. bulbocodium*, probably not unlike that which Blanchard described from the road to Almadén. The smallest plants were just a few centimetres tall with tiny, upward-facing flowers in which the narrow corona was less than one cm in diameter. The largest had scapes of up to 15 cm tall with a corona almost 4 cm across. Coronas ranged from smooth through slightly ruffled to very frilled, with some very widely flared but not so extreme as to be petunioid in form (flat-faced like a *Petunia*). One exceptional flower had ten perianth segments. The plants were growing as a thoroughly mixed population along a roadside verge and I see no reason why, despite their variability, they should not be regarded as *N. b. ssp. bulbocodium* var. *bulbocodium*. It is possible that the smaller plants are in their first year of flowering. The journey that afternoon also produced a few late flowering *Narcissus jonquilla* var. *minor* amongst an excellent and impressive population of *Fritillaria lusitanica*.





Back on track at Andújar I continued on Blanchard's trail. Turning off after quite some distance onto smaller roads, I again failed to locate a roadside site in an agricultural area at which Blanchard had previously found *Narcissus jonquilla* var. *henriquesii*. All those sites in lowland settled or agricultural contexts were to prove rather elusive but readers will be pleased to hear that my fortunes were soon to change.

I spent the next couple of days in the Parque Natural de las Sierras Cazorla, Segura y las Villas. In 1986 Blanchard was looking for *Narcissus longispatus*, but neither he nor I found it there, although the Parque Natural is vast and there are many sites where it might be found if only I had had more time. However, I did relocate his population of that most diminutive of daffodils, *Narcissus hedraeanthus* just below the Puerto de las Palomas. I'd anticipated this species being one of the highlights of my trip and wasn't disappointed, with many plants growing in dense floriferous clumps on a gentle slope. This was a satisfying end to a long day and I pitched my tent under some *Pinus* close by so that I could enjoy them again the next morning.

*Narcissus hedraeanthus*

After some misty photographs early the next morning I dropped down through the town of Cazorla before climbing back up to the Puerto de Tiscar. Here amongst the spiny dwarf shrubs of the 'hedgehog zone' I was to find more *N. hedraeanthus*, some perhaps even smaller than those seen previously. Walking a short distance back down the road I soon spotted the nodding flowers of *Narcissus cuatrecasatii* var. *segimonensis* at the top of a road cutting. Blanchard says they were inaccessible, and those visible from the road below are indeed perilously close to the edge, but I found an easy track and was able to explore the colony safely. *Hyacinthoides reverchonii*, endemic to the Sierras Cazorla and Segura was also scattered throughout.

The afternoon was spent exploring an additional site at the Nacimiento del Río Guadalquivir, clearly popular with day visitors. Here the young and energetic river crashes through a narrow gorge where many chasmophytes grow on the vertical rock faces. I was hoping to find some *Narcissus* species at this location. A few scattered plants of *N. hedraeanthus* were in flower in a clearing in the pine forest but there was no evidence of either *Narcissus bujei* (now *N. hispanicus* ssp. *bujei*) said to occur in a meadow close to the picnic site or *N. cuatrecasatii* var. *segimonensis* close by.

*Narcissus cuatrecasatii* var.  
*segimonensis*

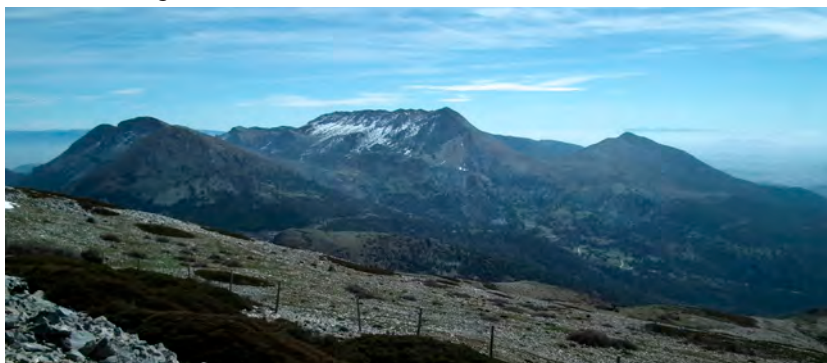




*Narcissus cuatrecasasii*

I now had to make another decision. I had little detail by which to locate a “forestry track” to the south of Mágina that was on Blanchard’s itinerary. Conversely, I’d been given information about additional sites I could probably find on the north side of this mountain range. Opting for the latter I skipped Blanchard’s site and pitched my tent at altitude above Torres. The next morning was crisp and clear and a thin layer of ice covered the tent. My first foray did not produce any *Narcissus* and in striking out for my second target of the day I made a small navigational error and ended up taking my rented VW Polo to the summit of a mountain! This was not to be entirely in vain, as I found many *Colchicum triphyllum* pushing up their pale pink blooms as well as the leaves of a *Crocus* and an amaryllid whose small, dark, round bulbs bore a strong resemblance to *N. cantabricus*. I managed to find the correct site on my way back down, where the blooms of many *N. cuatrecasasii* were catching the sun. *N. triandrus* was also present, and I found one plant of their hybrid *Narcissus x maginae*.

Having spent some time scrutinising the maps to determine which of the many valleys might be the correct “two valleys in the Guadix area east of Granada”, I decided to avoid more fruitless searching and instead to head for the heights of the Sierra Nevada. Blanchard had spent time driving  
A cold morning above Torres





*Narcissus nevadensis*

up towards the Pico Veleta and around Monachil hunting for *Narcissus nevadensis* but did not benefit from modern-day ease of finding and sharing information. With the additional data available I was able to find them in a very small, localised population. In 1990 this species was only known from a single population (probably the one here), but is now known to occur at five locations. Its preference for specific habitats on seasonally wet soils must mean that it remains rare and localised. This species is known for often bearing two flowers to a scape (sometimes more in cultivation), which is an unusual trait in Section *Pseudonarcissus*. Only two plants with single blooms were in flower and an examination of many buds yet to open suggested that only one plant might bear more than a single flower. There were many and widespread impacts to the surrounding habitats but the most likely immediate threat to this population appears to be successional habitat changes and shading out by scrub encroachment.

The following day I set out early, a short drive southwards bringing me to a pass north of the village of Otivar in the Sierra del Chapparal. Unsure where I might find the plants I was seeking, I parked at the top and walked down the road passing craters in the tarmac where falling rocks had landed. Eventually I spotted a few plants far below the road but

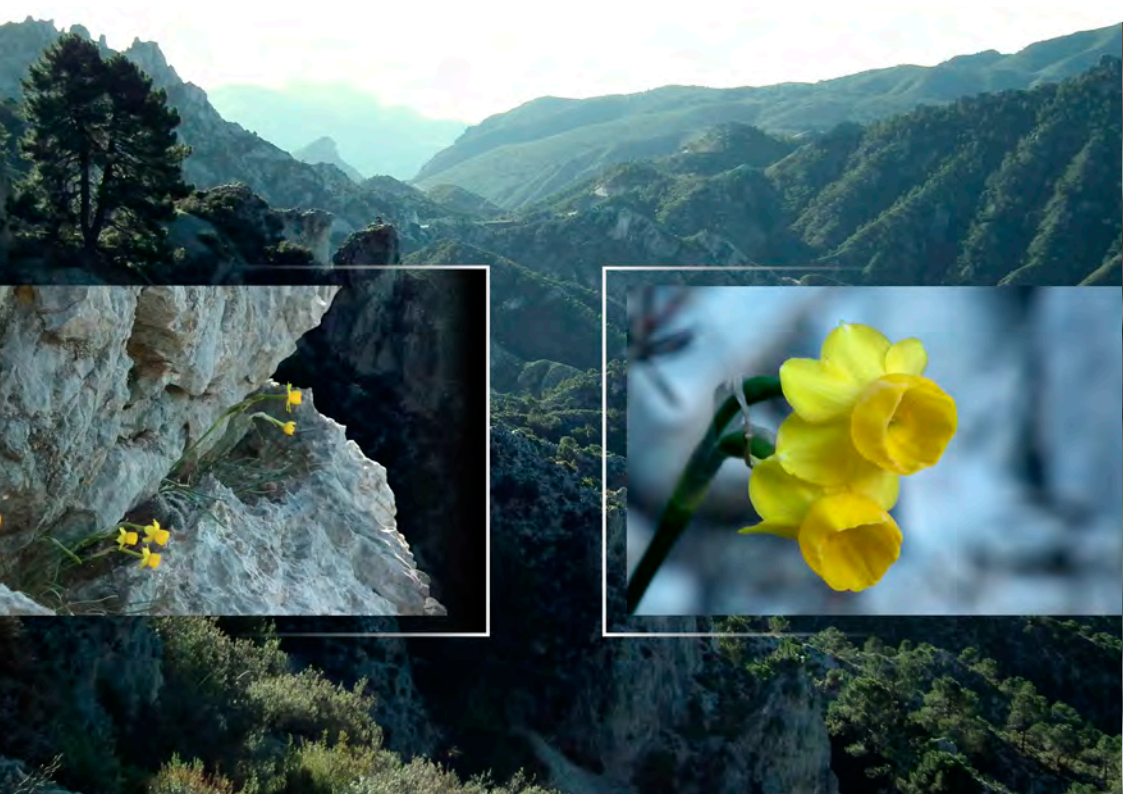
Advancing scrub may be threatening *Narcissus nevadensis*



Below: *Narcissus gaditanus* on outcrops in a rough landscape

they were inaccessible at the bottom of a sheer drop. However, looking through the fallen rocks and debris at the base of the rock face on the opposite side of the road I eventually found *Narcissus gaditanus*. So small they could easily be overlooked, these were good clumps of well-flowered plants in the rubble on the narrow verge. On my way back up to the car I found more on a rocky outcrop and, hopping over the crash barrier to get photographs, found more with a toehold in narrow cracks in the cliffs.

The next leg, after negotiating my way through Almuñécar, was a long drive along the sunny Costa. Acre after acre of polytunnels made for uninspiring views but the sun was bright and warm. Turning off the Autovía past Almería I encountered a land of dry and dusty gypsum soils. Aiming for a quarry, I'm not sure that I found the same site that Blanchard was at in 1986. Certainly there were none of the sinkholes with fig trees growing in them that he found. Despite that the site was very hot and dry I found a number of *Narcissus tortifolius* here, but they already showed signs of senescence and it was evident that very few plants had flowered. Examination of the 54 plants that I could find revealed only seven had flowered, of which just one had set seed. It is possible that, being close to the Desierto de Tabernas, this poor flowering owed to excessively dry weather in the preceding season.





Below: *Narcissus tortifolius* (inset: its twisted leaves)

There were similarly parched conditions at the Puerto de la Virgen in the Sierra de los Filabres. I found only a few plants of *N. cantabricus* ssp. *monophyllus* and fewer still had flowered. This contrasted with the sight that Blanchard saw and it is worth repeating his words here to convey the spectacle: “Even the southern side of this range seemed surprisingly green, and at the top of the Puerto de la Virgen, an altitude of 3510 feet, there was grass by the roadside ... only a minute or two later we drove round a corner and saw one of the most astonishing sights I have ever seen. The whole hillside looked as though it was covered with melting snow, with small patches of green showing through the white. But the white was *N. cantabricus*, sheets and sheets of them in profusion...”

In 2016 the habitats were hot and very dry. The grass was scorched and brown with no evidence of recent rain, suggesting a very dry season as at nearby Sorbas. Blanchard found his snowy blanket of *Narcissus* in an area that had been burnt. There was no evidence of recent fires when I visited, only extensive thorny scrub cover, which made access on the hillside very difficult and is likely to have shaded out many plants. Knowing that bulbs can persist for a long time beneath shrub cover one can only hope that any return to management in the future might allow *N. cantabricus* to flourish here again.





The first target on the next day was an additional site where I hoped to find *Narcissus dubius* but I was unsuccessful. However, small, white Tazettae grew in pockets of soil on large limestone boulders close to the road. Many plants had leaves or seedpods only but a few were still in flower. I spent some time to identify these plants accurately, as whilst bearing the typically twisted leaves of *N. tortifolius* (smaller plants showed only slight twisting) they also had some striation on the back of the leaves as given for *N. dubius* (in Blanchard's *Narcissus*, 1990). However, all other characteristics keyed out as *N. tortifolius* and subsequent checks confirmed this identification to my satisfaction.

I did not find the next site on Blanchard's 1986 itinerary, near to Fabricas de Riópar and it is most likely that the highly variable *N. triandrus* population he found there has fallen victim to road improvements. Exploring locally, I came across a good-sized population of *N. triandrus* var. *cernuus* under woodland near to the Nacimiento del Río Mundo but this one was very uniform in colour.

Up a bumpy road into the Sierra de Alcaraz, the pine woods at the Puerto de Crucetillas were carpeted with many plants that resemble *N. hedraeanthus* in their colouring and have larger perianth segments than most plants in Section *Bulbocodium*. However, they were taller, some scapes up to 20 cm, and had larger flowers and longer leaves than is usual for *N. hedraeanthus*. They were extremely variable, most evident in characteristics of the corona, including: extent of flaring to the corona, with one specimen almost petunioid; degree of ruffling to the corona, from smooth to very frilled; margin of the corona, from entire to deeply toothed or lacinate; as well as the relative proportion of the perianth segments. In 1986, John Blanchard identified them as *N. hedraeanthus* but in '*Narcissus*' (1990) suggested they should be regarded as *N. hedraeanthus* ssp. *luteolentus* and a range of hybrids. It is not known what the other hybrid parent might be and neither Blanchard nor I found any other *Narcissus* growing in the immediate vicinity. It is my view that this population is now a hybrid swarm and most likely to be the offspring of *N. hedraeanthus* and *N. cantabricus*. No plant showed pure traits of either parent but were a wide range of variable individuals with intermediate characteristics.

The taxonomy of these plants is complicated and confused. Various authorities propose several names, either as a 'valid' name or synonym, including *N. hedraeanthus* ssp. *luteolentus*, *N. cantabricus* ssp. *luteolentus*, *Narcissus albicans* and *Narcissus blancoi*. Following these taxonomic changes leads us into a frustrating circular argument. Based on observations in the field it is difficult to support the view that they are subspecies of either *N. hedraeanthus* or *N. cantabricus*. The name *N. albicans* applies to plants of parentage *N. bulbocodium* x *N. cantabricus* and could not describe these plants. *N. blancoi* is listed as a synonym of *N. albicans*, but is supposed to apply to plants of *N. hedraeanthus* x *N. cantabricus*. This



Facing: The road to Sierra de Alcaraz: hybrids of *Narcissus hedraeanthus* case highlights the fact that a thorough botanical review of the genus is long overdue and very much needed. I suggest that the name *N. x blancoi* (emphasising their hybrid origin) might describe these wild hybrid plants of parentage *N. hedraeanthus* x *N. cantabricus* most accurately, although I'm not a taxonomist so the nomenclatural validity of such a name is uncertain. The designation *Narcissus* 'luteolentus' (Hort.) could be used for those that are in cultivation.

From the pine woods the land falls away gently through a high river valley, the road following a meandering stream. It took quite some time to find my final target here but eventually I spotted a splash of yellow through the trees on the far side of the river valley. I never thought I would be so happy to find a yellow trumpet daffodil but here at last was a sizeable population of *N. longispathus* in a clearing of wet grassland on the toe of a slope under pine wood. The soil was very wet, running with spring-fed water and rushes dominated at the top of the slope. The main colony comprised approximately 1000 plants, about half of which were in flower and a second colony held perhaps another 500 plants. In 1986, Blanchard found plants on level ground as well as a slope (presumably the plants I describe here). I found no plants growing on the banks of the river or in adjacent habitats on the river valley floor where significant tree planting (of *Populus* species) has taken place. It is likely that human impacts have affected the suitability of the valley floor as a habitat for this species, which persists on the wooded slopes. They were almost uniform with little variation in flower colour. However, there was some variation in the degree of flaring to the corona, from some that were distinctly flared to others not at all and the margin was either entire, lobed or toothed. Most had only one flower per scape with just two specimens bearing twin flowers.

Rounding off my survey of sites on John W Blanchard's 1986 itinerary, I was unable to relocate five of his sites in 2016 because of significant changes in the landscape during the intervening years, unclear directions, or uncertainty of location. I decided not to visit three of Blanchard's sites because of uncertain location and concerns about time. I visited a further 13 additional sites *en route*. In 1986 Blanchard found a total of 14 taxa - that is species, subspecies, varieties and naturally occurring hybrids - across his 18 sites. Thirty years later I found 10 taxa at the 10 revisited sites and a total of 20 taxa across all my 23 sites.

At all the JWB 1986 sites I revisited in 2016, Blanchard's 1986 species were still present. However, some populations were diminished in abundance, extent or both. *Narcissus* habitats and populations are clearly frequent victims to 'improvements', which could explain my inability to relocate some of Blanchard's sites. There was more common evidence of significant development outwith protected areas such as Parque Natural and Parque Nacional, including upgrades to roads, intensive agriculture and afforestation. Other human impacts were also evident, such as an

absence of management in areas previously grazed or burned, an increase in scrub cover, and frequent leisure activity. Nonetheless, many species survive in areas without protection; indeed, many *Narcissus* populations are well-established and thriving at some of the sites I visited. It is uncertain how much of this is by design rather than happenstance.

I found that many *Narcissus* populations coincided with that of other significant aggregations of flora and fauna and some landscape types. Many *Narcissus* habitats were remote, difficult to access or might be considered unproductive in agricultural terms. Much of the higher, sloping and rocky ground in mountainous areas is protected as hunting reserves, which is not aimed at the benefit of wildflowers but can provide some level of protection because the habitats they encompass are preserved for their important game species. The same could be said of areas designated for scenic and landscape qualities, protected mainly for their aesthetic value.

Although the genus *Narcissus* has long received significant attention from naturalists, botanists, researchers and the scientific community there is still much to learn from study of living plants and populations in the field. Some species, such as *N. nevadensis* have very localised distribution and specific habitat requirements. Increasing threats and impacts mean that work to increase our understanding is more important now than ever

*Narcissus longispathus* showing the spathe



before. Furthermore, this is a rapidly evolving and readily hybridizing genus, which will always throw up puzzles to intrigue and surprise those who seek to study it. With the added factors that weather and seasons are variable from year to year, that the genus exhibits an extended season of flowering, and that it has wide distribution across diverse habitats, you are almost guaranteed that there will be an interesting daffodil to be seen somewhere in Spain throughout the winter and spring months.

## Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to the numerous supporters who donated towards my project through Crowdfunder, without whom this trip would never have got off the ground. The SRGC provided much support, including a generous contribution from the Exploration Fund. Margaret & Henry Taylor provided details of many sites of botanical interest in Andalucía and the benefit of their experience was invaluable. Many friends have provided encouragement, advice and practical support in so many ways. Thank you all.

Please see *The International Rock Gardener* 81 (September 2016) and 85 (January 2017) online for more details and photographs of my *Narcissus* expedition.

*Narcissus longispathus*



## Summary of *Narcissus* taxa found in 1986 and 2016

John W Blanchard 1986

### Section *Tazettae*

*N. tortifolius*

### Section *Jonquillae*

*N. fernandesii*

*N. gaditanus*

*N. jonquilla* var. *henriquesii*

### Section *Apodanthae*

*N. cuatrecasasii* var. *segimonensis*

### Section *Ganymedes*

*N. triandrus* var. *cernuus*

*N. triandrus* var. *concolor*

### Section *Bulbocodium*

*N. bulbocodium*

*N. cantabricus* ssp. *monophyllus*

*N. hedraeanthus*

*N. hedraeanthus* hybrids

### Section *Pseudonarcissus*

*N. longispathus*

### Intersectional hybrids

*N. x incurvicervicus*

*N. triandrus* x *N. bulbocodium*

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*N. tortifolius*

*N. gaditanus*

*N. jonquilla*

*N. jonquilla* var. *minor*

*N. cuatrecasasii*

*N. cuatrecasasii* var. *segimonensis*

*N. rupicola*

*N. triandrus* var. *cernuus*

*N. triandrus* var. *concolor*

*N. bulbocodium* var. *bulbocodium*

*N. cantabricus* ssp. *cantabricus*

*N. cantabricus* ssp. *monophyllus*

*N. hedraeanthus*

*N. hedraeanthus* hybrids

*N. longispathus*

*N. nevadensis*

*N. x maginae*

*N. x rupidulus*

*N. x susanna*

*N. x fosteri* (syn. *N. x rozeirae*)

More trees, but fewer  
*Narcissus longispathus*





## Modernising Communications with Members

Some members have already responded to this request, that was first made in issue 137 of the journal. For those who have not yet had opportunity to do so, the club still needs the ability to communicate with you in the most cost-effective and efficient ways possible.

To this end we would like your permission to collect and store your email address(es). In the enclosed Secretary's Pages booklet there is more information about what we are doing and why. Please take time to read it and, if you have an email address, consider letting us have permission to begin using it to get in touch with you from time to time over club business aside from renewals, seed exchange and suchlike. This will not mean a deluge of emails, just the occasional one, and please rest assured that the information will be as secure as your membership details are. And you can, of course, change your mind about receiving such emails at any time. Improving communication in this way will reduce immensely the work load of our voluntary officials and you will also be helping to reduce club costs. Thank you.

*Christine Boulby, Subscription Secretary ([srgc.subsec@gmail.com](mailto:srgc.subsec@gmail.com))*

## The SRGC Exploration Fund

Many young and adventurous people have been helped in the past by the financial support of the SRGC's Exploration Fund. The fund was set up in 1985 to help finance worthwhile projects or trips relating to rock garden and alpine plants. Since then many of these travellers have shared their adventures with us all with their reports, journal articles and a wide variety of talks, given throughout the whole range of our club's and our various groups' activities.

In 2017, the deadlines for receipt of applications are 28<sup>th</sup> February and 15<sup>th</sup> November. Application forms and guidelines for applicants are available from our website [www.srgc.net](http://www.srgc.net) or by contacting Carol Shaw, Delft Cottage, Dyke, Forres, IV36 2TF ([findhorncarol@icloud.com](mailto:findhorncarol@icloud.com))

And last – but very much not least – if it happens that you have been inspired by the activities that the Exploration Fund supports or if you have yourself perhaps benefited from an Exploration Fund grant in the past, I ask you most cordially to consider donating directly to the fund or to consider leaving a bequest in your will so as to enable the next generation of explorers to fulfil some of their own dreams.

Please contact the club treasurer ([rkpgreen@aol.com](mailto:rkpgreen@aol.com)) if you wish to help in either way.

*Liz Mills ([liz.saline@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liz.saline@hotmail.co.uk))*

# The SRGC at *Gardening Scotland*, 2016

Stan da Prato

Following another gold medal in 2015 with the staging that Graham Wenham had created, a group met later that year to consider how to continue the club's presence at *Gardening Scotland*. Some tweaking was needed to refine the stand. The design already had areas of sun & shade, damp & dry conditions. To expand it we decided to incorporate a crevice garden as an extension to the sunny side with its limestone strata. Rob Graham began experiments in his garage – the car lives outside – and we started on the practicalities. A false base reduced the need for large amounts of compost, always a concern when building a rock stand at a flower show. The issue that soon hit us was how to deal with the edge of the crevice which was higher than the nearby seasonally dry stream bed. We already had a rock wall in the display and, thinking of his holidays in the Alps, Rob suggested we could have an alpine meadow. A piece of lawn turf was bought from B & Q and laid out in his polytunnel where it began to grow vigorously. To make the thing look realistic and allow planting we had to have a relatively gentle angle running down from the crevices to



the stream. To do this we utilised plastic bags full of last year's compost. Because the turf is sown into a membrane, a Stanley knife was needed to allow us to insert the plants.

Construction started around midday on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May. By Monday we were adding plants brought in by Ian Christie, who provided so very many this year. He soon had four very large *Celmisia* inserted into the top box that is the basis of the central rock ridge. He followed by planting the shady north corrie and the damp west side with many fine plants, notably several *Anemone trullifolia*. Meanwhile Liz Mills had been on plant-collecting journeys as far as Ardfearn Nursery near Inverness as well as picking up some special plants from skilled growers such as Cyril Lafong who had 'nothing ready' but still provided several good plants including a very large specimen *Lewisia* 'Lena'. *Lewisia* were prominent this year on the sunny side of the stand with a very big *L.* 'George Henley' and a hybrid from Dave Millward. It is interesting to note how different the plants are despite the show's taking place at the same time each year. After the late 2016 spring *Rhodohypoxis* were just coming into flower and Sam Sutherland's large *Eriogonum* was not even ready. We used a full tray of *Sempervivum arachnoideum* in order to fill cracks in the rockwork.





Planting continued into Wednesday. An interesting new plant for us was a *Rheum alexandrae*, the Chinese glasshouse plant, in full flower; the 'flowers' are bracts that shield the real flowers and encourage pollinating flies. The crevices meant less room at ground level so *Meconopsis punicea* and *M. quintuplinervia* moved up to join trilliums, primulas and others on the damper side; that side also featured a number of *Lilium mackliniae* and *Nomocharis* in flower.

Another innovation was not to bring in the big *Meconopsis* plants until the Wednesday, to keep them fresher. The Highland Hall has very little natural light. The meconopsis all looked very well. Ian brought the white *M.* 'Marit', *M.* 'Hensol Violet' as well as the blue *M.* 'Slieve Donard' from his collection. Several arisaemas provided interesting shapes as did a range of ferns. The seasonally dry stream again featured our lowest-growing plants with *Raoulia* species and creeping willows. By its side Cyril's large *Haberlea* opened its flowers as the show itself opened.

Our new crevice needed more stone and quite a bit of compost and gravel: one large tonne bag of compost, six bags of bark and over ten bags of gravel. Planting the meadow was tricky; too much cutting and the membrane would disintegrate - so we put relatively few plants in the grass, but they showed to good effect. We had several *Dactylorhiza*, yellow *Trollius*, blue *Aquilegia* and a tiny white *Viola* from New Zealand sent in by Jean Wyllie.

The stand featured many mature specimen plants including several rarely seen at flower shows and grown by members; this was commented on by the judges. Once again our Brother labelling machine proved its worth. Trina Rogerson spent a full day just making new labels. As usual our distinctive SRGC stone plaque was added at the end of planting. Peggy Anderson and the Thursday team spent that day tivating to give a show-standard finish. All this effort was duly rewarded with a premier gold medal, one of only five such awards over the entire show; we understand that we were only a few marks away from *Best in Show*. The SRGC also won the best alpine exhibit.

Before the show opened to the public our banners were popped up and seeds from Ian Christie with attractive labels made by Ian Pryde were put ready for sale. After three days that saw thousands of visitors admire the stand we had to watch carefully on the final afternoon when the sell-off took place on the commercial stands; the public wanted to buy plants and ours are much sought after but were not for sale because members wanted them back!

A dozen of us demolished the stand and bagged the compost, now mixed with grit, in an impressively short space of time at close of show on Sunday. On Monday three of us took materials back to the club hut helpfully accommodated for us at Binny Plants in West Lothian.

Club members were on site for nine days although most weren't there for all the time. Several of the builders have since had a meeting to consider how to maintain the SRGC presence (the biggest horticultural society in the country) - at the national garden show. A very different layout based on educating visitors about alpine and woodland plants and their cultivation is under discussion.

### Members who took part

Peggy Anderson, Ian Bainbridge, Anne Bush, Ann Chambers, Anne & Ian Christie, Stan da Prato, Helen Donald, Ken East, Alan Gardner, Rob Graham, Richard Green, Cyril Lafong, Sandy Leven, Sheila & Neil McNulty, Liz Mills, Ian Pryde, Trina Rogerson, Ann Steele, Linda & Sam Sutherland, Jackie Thomlinson, Maureen Wilson, Jean Wyllie



# My Garden

Gert Hoek



When I showed some pictures of my garden on social media I got a lot of reactions. We don't have that much space where I live: our whole plot is about 350 square metres. So we don't have the space to make a rock garden with big beds and lawns. I have created a rock garden with a modern design and modern materials and - most of





Newly rebuilt peat bed with peat blocks

all - enough room for lots of different plants. This design, or parts of it, may be suitable for the smaller gardens which are nowadays more and more common. But before I tell you about my garden I would tell my own previous story.

I attended a horticultural school where I followed an education as a garden designer and nurseryman. I was then living with my parents. They have a large garden where I could experiment with plants and ponds. At that time terrestrial orchids were introduced, mostly available as swamp plants near ponds. I was working at an aquatic plant-nursery so I could get good amounts of various species, mostly *Dactylorhiza*, *Orchis* and *Epipactis*. When I accepted a new job, I came to know another man who also grew terrestrial orchids. When I visited him he had no swamp or pond to grow these orchids but he had a rock garden and a little greenhouse. It was then that I decided to build a rock garden.

In 1992 we bought a house in the middle of the Netherlands, in Dronten in the Flevopolder, about 3 metres below sea level. The soil is heavy clay loam, sometimes blue in colour. When I drew the first design, I had to take into account the fact that we had children. So I created little pieces of rock garden and peat beds around a big lawn with a swing. I added tons of broken bricks and sand to mix with the heavy soil.

By 2013, the kids had grown up and we decided to create a new garden with modern design and modern materials. Building a new rock

Raised bed with tufa







View from the terrace towards the house, with raised (peat) beds

garden makes it possible for you to learn from your past and build new pieces with new and increased knowledge. My aim in designing any (rock) garden is that it looks good, but most of all that it should contain a lot of space to grow many alpines in different habitats. Of course, my other family members had their impact on the design: enough space to enjoy the sun and to invite people to chill in the garden. So two big terraces were created, one for a dinner table with six chairs and one for a lounge set.

In late summer of 2013 I start breaking down the old garden, removing hedges, old pavement, fences, the greenhouse and a piece of the lawn. I also removed plants from the rock garden; most of them were potted and kept aside in boxes. I demolished most of the existing stone and peat block walls. After taking nine trailers to the dump, I could start building again. I had to dig through the blue clay, to put in fifteen metres of rainwater drain. Then I added 12 trailers of sand for the new pavement because the clay in the polder sinks a bit every year. I started, with help, to lay the paved area. We chose an anthracite-coloured concrete stone with the look of natural stone and a colour that will not fade. We also chose a mix of different measures of stones: 30 x 30, 30 x 60, 60 x 60 and 60 x 90 (cm) to get a more natural look. It was heavy work because the biggest stones were more than 70 kilogrammes in weight. Once the pavement was ready I could start rebuilding the garden. My choice was to build only raised beds. These are very accessible and in the walls there is also space for different plants.

Crevices in slate, seen from the church roof!



**For the raised beds** I used very practical components. Here is my list ...

**tufa blocks:** 15 x 15 x 35 (cm), they are made of pressed tufa, easy to drill holes for plants, and when the blocks get older they look quite natural

**concrete pavement:** 30 x 30 x 4 (cm), split across the middle, laid with the broken side showing

**peat blocks:** 15 x 15 x 35 (cm), from soft peat, used for making potting compost, these are sourced from the Baltic States, fixed with metal pins, ideal to grow plants

**scaffold planks:** used by building companies, a beautiful grey colour contrasting with the concrete, I used pond liner on the inside to prevent rotting

**For the rock garden** I used the following materials:

**tufa rocks:** used in rock garden and troughs, ideal for a lot of alpines

**lava stones:** the porous ones, light in weight, these are easy to drill holes in and are suitable for a whole range of alpines, for example - saxifrages

**slate:** different kind of slates, used in troughs

**granite stones:** 5-15 mm, filling between the tufa rocks

**lava stones:** 5-15 mm, filling between the lava rocks

**lava sand:** between the lava stones

**bark:** from Mediterranean pines, brown to red in colour, used on peat beds



The front garden resists flying balls  
*Gentiana verna ssp. balcanica*  
growing in peat



**In the garden itself** I continued with using these different materials. For example, the fences in my garden are made from those scaffold planks.

The peat blocks are used in the different peat beds that I have created. In these beds there is not only peat, but also composted pine needles, composted beech leaves and bark. In this way, I get different types of soil. For a peat bed in the sun I have used a pond liner to prevent the soil from drying out. It lies on the bottom with about 30 to 40 cm of soil mix above. From the peat blocks I build wet and dry walls, and behind the wet walls is also a pond liner filled up with suitable compost. I use peat blocks in the troughs together with slate, to create a spot for choice alpine.

So, in the backyard I have built all kinds of raised beds with spacious paths between them. I make use of every square inch of the garden and have created many different spots to grow plants. Rock garden and walls, peat beds and peat walls - all are both in full sun and shade. I have incorporated a watering system controlled by a small computer on the hose so that when I am not at home the garden will be automatically watered.

The front garden was the first to be built: I needed a kind of barrier between the footpath and my garden. Then I thought about the pictures I had seen of granite kerbstones with tufa in between. But the granite kerbstones are so expensive and rare that I chose to



*Pyrethrum leontopodium*  
*Cassiope 'Beatrice Lilly'*



*Androsace muscoidea longiscapa*  
*forma alba*





*Primula aureata*

use the modern form: concrete ones 100 x 20 x 4 cm, partially dug into the soil, fastened with cement and with lava stones between them. In the rest of the front garden I only used lava stones together with some troughs. In this front garden I grow the easier plants and bulbs, so that when a ball from children playing nearby rolls in, there is no great loss.

I have built a new lean-to greenhouse with aluminium frame and glass, about 4 by 2 metres, against our garage and along the boundary with the neighbours. I use the greenhouse as a working shed, propagation place and for a small collection of choice alpines. They grow in pots in two gutters, one along the wall (no sun after noon) and another along the aluminium frame (sun all day). The garages are kept frost-free so the two walls are "warm" during winter. It is then that half my greenhouse is kept frost-free by using temporary bubble-wrap walls and a small electric heater. In winter I keep here the frost-tender plants and all kind of young plants like *Cyclamen*, *Shortia*, South-Americans and others.

My greatest joy is to propagate plants, but you need space to do that, so at the back of my garden behind a fence there is a cold frame. It is a wooden construction with a bottom of polycarbonate that slopes to the back to ensure that any surplus water flows off. There are polycarbonate plates on top which I cover with shading cloth in summer. The frame is built with space beneath for soil mixes, plant boxes, pots and miscellanea. It can hold about 900 pots of 7 x 7 cm.

It turned out that I needed more space than the greenhouse and the cold frame could provide, so my expansion has been onto the roof of my garage and the carport. This is about 10 x 3 metres and I made four open frames and two boxes, between which is a path made from special paving suitable for use on a roof. The plants on the roof are also automatically watered. I have now grown plants on the roof for almost 20 years!



Lava set between concrete kerbstones in the front garden



Crevice trough, the slate made from a broken table

The boxes are filled with sand and have polycarbonate covers. One is a bulb frame and in the other are alpines: the pots are plunged in the sand. In these boxes there is a pipe in the sand almost to the bottom of the box and water goes through this pipe to wet the sand.

The frames are made from wood and they are constructed such that, in autumn, polycarbonate plates can be placed to protect plants against winter wetness. There is some space between the boxes and the roofing material, to ensure optimal drainage. One frame is for the mother plants, some in clay pots and others in plastic pots. Through the years I have found out that some plants grow better in plastic pots, which don't dry out so much as clay pots. Almost all *Ranunculus* and *Callianthemum* are in plastic pots.

On the other two frames the boxes are mainly plants I propagated and exchange or sell. In the growing season I climb the ladder almost every day to check the plants. When plants are in flower I take them into my greenhouse or onto the plant cabinet on the terrace, creating our own plant show ... so we don't need to climb the ladder to see them flower.

I have to acknowledge the labour of rest of my family; they did the furnishing of the garden. They chose the colours of the furniture, cushions, pots ...

This article appears in its present form having first appeared in *The International Rock Gardener* on [www.srgc.net](http://www.srgc.net)

Expansion onto the roof ...



# North-west Turkey in the Spring

David Millward

North-west Turkey is a rich agricultural region including abundant orchards of almond, peach and apricot. It also has a rich native flora that seems little visited by plant-hunting tourists. However, there is easy access by air and the roads and hotels are good. The region deserves to be better known. The photographs that follow in this photo-essay were taken during a week-long excursion at the end of March, 2015. The trip started in Izmir and ended in Istanbul taking in, *en route*, the ski resorts of Boz Dağ, just an hour's drive east of Izmir, and Uludağ south of the metropolis of Bursa; our final location was Lake Abant, south-west of Bolu. Whilst Izmir has a Mediterranean climate, the proximity of Bursa and Bolu to the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea results in a temperate oceanic climate in which rain can be expected throughout the year. In consequence, the flora includes many species that are amenable to cultivation in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. However, driving just a few tens of kilometres south from Bolu leads to drier continental conditions. Among the highlights were seven *Crocus* species, of which only *C. ancyrensis* is not shown here.

The snow had not long since melted from the upper slopes of Boz Dağ. Apart from the venerable junipers few plants had emerged from their winter slumber. Here and there were the first spring bulbs including *Corydalis nariniana*, *Crocus chrysanthus* and *Scilla bifolia*





Selected forms of *Aubrieta deltoidea* are grown in many gardens and are often despised by the rock gardening community. The species is a native of south-eastern Europe and western Turkey. Here it was seen growing in rock crevices in slate on the lower slopes of Boz Dağ. The flower colour varied little among the many plants flowering at the locality

*Corydalis nariniana* was among the very few early spring flowers seen on the upper slopes of Boz Dağ





Numbers of *Alyssum peltarioides* populate a vertical road cutting in basalt Drifts of *Anemone coronaria* are a common sight in the Mediterranean region. Colours vary from blue to red or white, in multicoloured groups or in single-toned populations. This delightful pink form filled one meadow, not far from Salihli, an hour's drive east of Izmir







*Iris pumila* occurs on limestone at many localities in north-west Turkey; these images are from populations near Bigadiç and Bilecik. Only the yellow-flowered form of this species was seen, but the colour of the falls varied from pale yellow to shades of red-brown

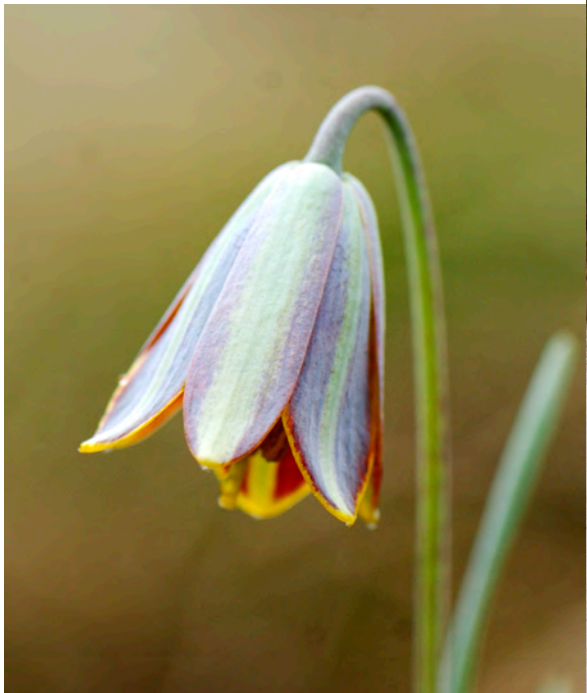


Facing: South from Bolu towards Beypazari and Inner Anatolia, the drier climate has produced a 'badlands' landscape with little plant cover and stark, multicoloured mudstone formations. Halophytic plants are common in the area, probably the result of calcium sulphate in the rock. The important bird sanctuary seen here is a wetland created by the damming of the river and hosts huge numbers of cormorants and a massive heronry. Osprey, marsh harrier and white-tailed eagle were also seen 🍁



Near to the bird sanctuary grows *Muscari adillii*, a species only recently described, and named after Prof. Dr Adil Güner. Its distinct leaf form, clearly seen here, differentiates this species from the widespread and well known *Muscari neglectum*, which was growing alongside and well past flowering

*Fritillaria fleischeriana* grows in stiff red clay soil around Beypazari south of Bolu. In cultivation this delicate little species is only seen at present in the collections of enthusiasts







*Primula vulgaris* is a common plant of deciduous woodland floors in north-west Turkey. Though the primrose is well known to us in the UK it is good to see such large populations elsewhere in its widespread distribution. All at this particular locality have yellow flowers, though white flowered forms make up a small proportion of the population, for example, farther east in the mountains south of Trabzon

An area of recently thinned oak woodland on the slopes of Uludağ, hosts a small population of red, pink and violet *Primula vulgaris* ssp. *sibthorpii*. Interestingly, all plants seemed young, with no large, old ones





Many of the deciduous woodlands in north-west Turkey host *Helleborus orientalis*. All the plants seen here are white flowered





The delicate *Dentaria quinquefolia* grows among hellebores and *Galanthus plicatus* ssp. *byzantinus* in woodland along the road from Bolu to Lake Abant





Large numbers of *Cyclamen coum* in black pine forest. This species is plentiful in the cooler and damper mountains adjacent to the Black Sea

Left and Right:

A carpet of *Corydalis caucasica*, along with a few *Helleborus orientalis* in deciduous woodland south of Bolu. The delicate pale pink flowers contrast with the deeper pink of *Cyclamen coum* (Above)





The delicate *Galanthus gracilis* grows in open oak woodland. At one locality where the snowdrops were in fruit the trees were covered in many different lichen forms, giving an almost ethereal feel to the habitat. *G. gracilis* is readily identifiable from its narrow, upright leaves that are typically twisted







*Cyclamen coum* seems equally at home in open meadows above Lake Abant. Despite being buried beneath snow that fell the day previously, the flowers of this hardy plant seemed undamaged

The more robust *Galanthus plicatus* ssp. *byzantinus* was photographed alongside the road from Bolu to Lake Abant





At 2543 m, Uludağ, towers above Bursa, once capital of the Ottoman Empire. The mountain is a ski resort and a national park. As the snow melts in spring, glades in the forest of black pine are brought to life by carpets of *Crocus*. Here, *Crocus chrysanthus* and *C. herbertii* are dotted around the meadow floor. In this habitat only close inspection of the plants enables identification

*Crocus chrysanthus* on Uludağ





In another forest glade on Uludağ., *Crocus chrysanthus* grows alongside *Crocus biflorus* ssp. *pulchricolor*, in a rich tapestry of colour forms which appear to include hybrids between the two species

In places, tight groupings of yellow crocus were readily identified as *Crocus herbertii* from their stoloniferous habit







Facing and this page: Colour forms and hybrids of *Crocus chrysanthus* and *C. biflorus* ssp. *pulchricolor* on Uludağ 🍁





Facing: Colour forms and hybrids of *Crocus chrysanthus* and *C. biflorus* ssp. *pulchricolor* on Uludağ 🇹🇷



Above: *Crocus flavus* in beech forest on Uludağ



Lake Abant is situated about 32 km (20 miles) west-south-west of Bolu at 1328 m above sea level. Snow fell soon after our arrival at the type locality for *Crocus abantensis* and yet more snow fell the next day. The prospect of being able to see this wonderful crocus seemed remote

Luck was on our side as, on the final day of our visit, we awoke to a sunny but freezing cold morning. The crocuses in the meadows above Lake Abant at almost 1400 m above sea level were completely buried. However, a few hours of sun worked wonders and by lunchtime many were free and open in warm areas. I have never seen snow melt so fast. In just a few hours the meadows had become almost free of snow and thoroughly waterlogged from the melt water

Forest glades with suitable aspect on the margins of the meadows were first to clear of snow, revealing communities that included *Crocus olivieri*, *Cyclamen coum*, *Helleborus orientalis* and *Scilla bifolia*







A fine group of *Crocus olivieri*

Below and Overleaf: Thousands of beautiful *Crocus abantensis* carpeted the wet meadows. Dotted through the crocus were just a few pink *Colchicum triphyllum*. The crocus seemed little affected by the snow that had buried them the day previously 🍁







# A Very Simplified Guide to Plant Naming

Mala Janes

This is just a brief introduction that I hope will help others in my position. I knew practically nothing about botanical naming until I put together a display to mark our group's Ruby Anniversary. I wanted to celebrate with 'ruby' plants but also needed to include educational information. Thus it was that I grouped the pictures according to their 'Family'. These families needed explaining and so the snowball of knowledge grew and I had to learn about nomenclature - which I found quite complicated; some simplification was needed for my own small brain to cope. Here are my jottings of what I now find useful to know for buying, growing and showing the plants that I love.

Common names are often local in their use and do not clearly identify the plant. I realized this when trying to describe weeds – we call them all

*Nymphaea alba*:

otherwise the European White Water Lily, White Water Rose, White Nenuphar, Weiße Seerose, Nilofar, Romanian White Waterlily, European White Water Lily, Sweishaluk, থরো অঙোবা, Tharo-angouba, kumuda, utpalam, neytarkilanku, neytal, neitharkizhangu, رفولین , Nilofar, Gule nilofar, White Lotus, Nenuphar, Grzybienie białe, Bobbins, Nénuphar blanc ...

(Photo by kind courtesy of Ingrida Kuliesyte of *Crocus*: please see their website at <http://www.crocus.co.uk>)



sorts of things, some unprintable. For example, take the widespread and distinctly non-weedy European White Water Lily, *Nymphaea alba*: it has 15 English common names, 44 French, 105 German, 81 Dutch, and many more globally. Such Babel-like confusion was overcome by Carl Linnaeus, who created the *binomial system* of naming plants and animals. Each species of plant and animal is given a genus name followed by a specific species name, both names being in Latin. By using a plant's Latin taxonomic name, each can be positively identified from over two hundred thousand known species. Interestingly, Luke Howard applied the same ideas to cloud classification in 1802 - a system that has endured to this day. The binomial spelling is universal but pronunciation is not; it varies according to the language and dialect of the speaker. Which brings me to the problems of pronunciation.

## Pronouncing Plant Names

Latin may be a dead language but it comes alive when you read it and speak it. In scientific use, the ecclesiastical pronunciation is commonly used, akin to modern Italian. Here are a few basic guidelines that may remove the uncertainty that occasionally besets us. Latin is entirely phonetic and there are no silent letters. What you see is what you say.

Consonants are, largely, pronounced as you would normally do in English, except the letters *c* and *g* become soft in front of *i* and *e* (as in *Cecil* and *Gentle*). The letters *ch* are pronounced like *k*. There are long and short vowels and diphthongs such as *ae* (as in "say") and *au* (as in "house"), all of which are reasonably consistent. There are no silent syllables: *Rudbeckia* is rood-BEK-ee-uh and *Miscanthus sinensis* is miss-CAN-thus see-NEN-sis.

Accent may be a matter of local style. Generally, in two syllable words we accentuate the first syllable: *Cornus*. Otherwise, accentuate the penultimate syllable as in *Rhododendron*, but use the third from the end syllable when the second syllable is short, as the genus and species names of *Kolkwitzia amabilis*. Complicated perhaps, but you get used to it. I quickly realised that everyone has their own pronunciation and that nobody who gardens really minds or cares too much about the details. There is an inexhaustible supply of names but here are a few useful ones with their meanings.

<i>alba</i> = white	( <i>Calceolaria alba</i> )
<i>americana</i> = of America	( <i>Hepatica americana</i> )
<i>baccata</i> = berry bearing	( <i>Taxus baccata</i> )
<i>officinalis</i> = medicinal	( <i>Paeonia officinalis</i> )
<i>niger</i> = black	( <i>Helleborus niger</i> )
<i>repens</i> = creeping	( <i>Dianthus repens</i> )
<i>ruber</i> = red	( <i>Centranthus ruber</i> )
<i>sanguineus</i> = blood-red	( <i>Ceanothus sanguineus</i> )
<i>undulata</i> = wavy	( <i>Urginea undulata</i> )
<i>vulgaris</i> = common	(Common? In the SRGC? Some mistake, surely? Ed.)

## Taxonomic Classification and Common Divisions

Taxonomy is the science of systematically naming and organizing organisms into similar groups. Plant taxonomy is an old science but with modern developments there are frequent changes, many stemming from the increasing use of DNA analysis. Nevertheless, an overview of plant taxonomy helps the gardener understand the basis of many cultural practices.

All living things are divided into groups each called a **taxon**. These **taxa** are arranged in a hierarchy from **kingdom** through to **subspecies**. Plants are in the **kingdom** of **Plantae**. Other kingdoms include **Fungi**, **Protista** (one-celled organisms such as yeasts and bacteria) and **Animalia** (animals). The plant kingdom is divided into two: bryophytes (including mosses and liverworts); and vascular plants (plants with a system to conduct water, rather like our own blood system), which divide into two subgroups: seedless and seeded. **Seeded plants** divide into two classes: **Gymnosperms** and **Angiosperms**. These make up most of the plant population.

I find the next bit easy to remember if I think of my friends Jim and Angie. Jim goes to the gym for exercise (movement). Angie gets her enjoyment in other ways!

**Gymnosperms** (meaning naked seed) produce not flowers but seeds on the end of modified bracts such as a pine cone. Many have scale- or needle-like leaves so fir, ginkgo, pine, and spruce are good examples. These need movement, usually from the wind, for pollination.

**Angiosperms** (broadleaf flowering plants) produce seeds from flowers that attract the insects they need to pollinate them.

**Angiosperms** divide into two: **monocotyledon** (plants that produce one leaf on germination – so mostly bulbs) and **dicotyledon** (plants that produce two leaves on germination).

**Family** is the highest taxonomic classification used normally. Every plant is assigned to a family that has the same characteristics. This may give you a clue to the growing conditions a plant wants. If you look at a show schedule, some plant families are listed at the front and the show classes are organized accordingly. The names of families end in -aceae.

**Genus** is the next familiar classification. It is the normal name that you give to a plant and is the first name on a plant label. It is always written with a capital letter.

**Species** defines an individual plant. Often the name describes some particular aspect of the plant – flower colour, size or shape of the leaves, or it may be named after the place where it was found.

Together, the **Genus** and **Species** names refer to only one particular plant and compose its binomial name. The name of the **Species** is written after the **Genus** name, in lower case with no capital letter. In this way we have *Primula denticulata*, a species in the *Primula* genus with denticulate (toothed) leaves.

**Variety or Subspecies.** Sometimes the species is further divided into varieties or sub-species that contain plants not quite so distinct. This is introduced by var. or ssp. or subsp. before it. *The Rock Garden* uses ssp. merely to save the space of a couple of letters. Examples are *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* var. *leichtlinii* and *Cyclamen graecum* ssp. *graecum*.

**Cultivar** is a cultivated variety: a special plant that has arisen either naturally or by deliberate hybridizing and can be reproduced either vegetatively or from seed to produce more of the same plant. The name follows the genus and species names. It is written in the language of the person who named it and should not be translated. It is written in single quotation marks with 'A Capital Letter For Each Word', as in *Iris graeberiana* 'Yellow Fall', seen in Cyril Lafong's example below.

**Form** is selected by growth habit, is not reproducible by seed, and is designated with the word 'forma'.

Now, when you look at plant labels you may have a bit more of a clue as to what you are looking at. If you look that puzzling plant name up in a book or on the internet you will find its family and have a greater clue as to how to grow it and what will grow well with it. Talk to people about it and use its name; non-plant people will be impressed at your erudition and you will quickly increase your knowledge of plants.

## Further Reading

A full, entertaining and more authoritative account of plant naming and its relations to origins and growing conditions is given by Lorraine Harrison in her *RHS Latin for Gardeners: Over 3,000 Plant Names Explained and Explored* (Royal Horticultural Society, 2012).

*Iris graeberiana* 'Yellow Fall' (Cyril Lafong)



# 50 Years Ago: Rhododendrons for the Small Garden

Phyllis Warren of Dunedin, New Zealand

Richard Green & Mike Thornley (Glenarn)

**W**e have a splendid little plant of *Rhododendron racemosum*, which I think may be Forrest's dwarf form, since it was a mature plant of about 12 inches high when we came here, and is now, 14 years later, only an inch or two taller, though a little thicker and more compact in growth. The flowers, tiny trusses of soft pink, small as they are, cover the plant completely each year. This lovely little species also grows in the rock garden in full sun, having been moved from the foot of an old flowering cherry where it was starved and dry. The amount of seed set by this small plant astonishes me afresh each year; it is a long and painstaking job to remove the seed heads, which I do with nail scissors. But the necessity for this care cannot be too strongly emphasised if one wants the rhododendrons to bloom to their full capacity each year.

*Rhododendron racemosum* at the University of California Botanical Garden  
(Photo: Stan Shebs 2006, published under licence of Wikimedia Commons)





Now that we have about 150 rhododendrons (of which all but a dozen or so have reached flowering stage), this is a major task. On the big old plants it can take two or three hours and the use of a ladder – a rather tedious task admittedly, but a not unpleasant one for a summer evening. In Dunedin we have the long twilight you do in most of Scotland – though not quite as long. We think it well worth the trouble to perform this service for all our rhododendrons, both big and small. There are differences of opinion on this subject, and I was most interested when in England in 1960 to hear Mr T H Findlay, lecturing on the Savill Gardens, state that two girls were employed throughout the year at Savill to do nothing else but dead-head the rhododendrons. Perhaps it is not always possible for the owners of large rhododendron gardens to have such labour at their disposal, nor for those with smaller gardens to find the time, but there is no doubt that results justify the effort if it can be made.

*(From the Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club – September 1966, Number 39, Page 122)*

### **Comment from Glenarn: Deadheading**

Phyllis Warren's fine article is a reflection of its period; when there was sufficient time to deadhead 150 rhododendrons in a garden. Deadheading must have been in the air as the year previously, Archie Gibson, one of our predecessors at Glenarn, had written an article 'Dead-heading or otherwise' (*RHS Rhododendron and Camellia Yearbook 1965*) in which he rehearsed the usual arguments for what he called delousing: that deadheading prevented the plant from expending a greater part of its energy on producing seed, resulting in a better flowering the following year, and longer life generally. The downside of carrying out this often fiddly, sticky and sometimes midgy operation was offset by the subsequent show of flowers, lack of frost permitting (and frost itself not entirely raged against as it was a natural check on seed production). For Archie another bonus obtained from deadheading was observing the plants at close quarter: '*R. moupinense ... which sets pods almost the size and shape of date stones, whereas fastigiatum's little clustered pods are like mouse's whiskers*'.

Peter Cox, writing a few years later, in his classic book *Dwarf Rhododendrons* (London, 1965) makes the point that rhododendrons are never deadheaded in the wild. He also notes that the truly alpine lepidote dwarf rhododendrons, once fully established, will flower year on year without interference. However, like Phyllis Warren, he singles out *R. racemosum* for treatment, in his case because of its habit of setting masses of ugly capsules which from an aesthetic viewpoint he suggests should be removed. Here lies the nub of it. Most deadheading takes place when the plant has already made the effort to produce seed; to deadhead earlier is to run the risk of inadvertently removing the whole shoot. Perhaps deadheading is nothing more than obsessive tidiness, a trait not entirely unknown in rock gardeners. In our times Archie Gibson's article might be re-titled '*Deadheading, dead end?*'

# Making a Three Metre Trough

Jan Tholhuijsen

We all know the wonderful two to three hundred year old troughs, entirely chiselled by hand. In Western Europe they seem almost priceless, especially two to three metre troughs, easily reaching four figure (£) prices even when they are available. In my previous life in the Czech Republic, we had twelve of them in various sizes. They were found on the farm that we purchased, used in the stables as feeding troughs; they were just there - delightful!

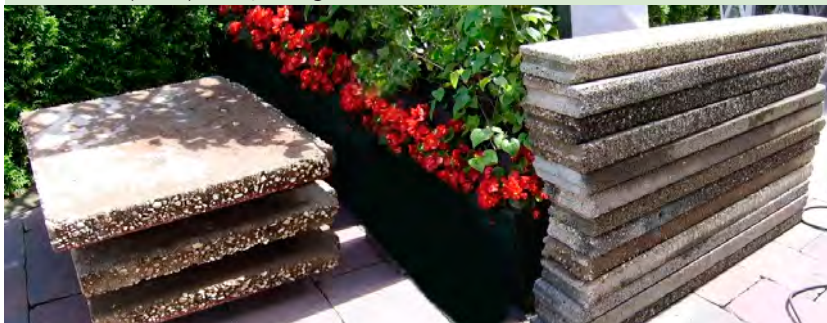
After three years we are back in the Netherlands, with 400 square metres of land. I wanted to back it up with a little rock garden. So far, so good: tuff, lava, sandstone and home-made troughs; but a three metre trough was still an unsatisfied craving. Not to buy such an old thing perhaps, but to create a new one. But how to do this cheaply? You must do it on the spot because, once made, such a trough cannot be lifted. I was loth to make expensive formwork for only one use. So here I would like to explain how I did this job and achieved my ambition. Let's start ...

## Stage One - Construction

For this creative labour, I recommend:

- Fourteen small paving kerbs 100 x 15 x 5 cm that I bought second-hand (*North-American readers may prefer 'curb' rather than 'kerb'*)
- Six gravel tiles (slabs) 50 x 50 cm.
- Tile adhesive for the exterior
- A reinforcement bar of diameter 8 mm, approximately 3 metres long
- One metre of stainless steel threaded stud and stainless steel nuts
- Ten 120 mm screws and dowel plugs
- A small packet of peat
- One 25 kg bag of Portland cement
- Chicken wire mesh
- Plastic to protect the ground
- Old tea towels, cotton or linen pieces, all at least 60 cm long
- A hammer drill with long masonry bit, and a masonry grinder.

Gravel tiles (slabs) and paving kerbs





The first course on the gravel tiles

The glued and pinned base with two stainless cross-braces (shown as red)



Find the right place and lay the plastic down; once the trough is finished you will be able to cut it clear. Lay the tiles top down and side by side in a row on the plastic, making a base of 50 x 300 cm. The tiles should lie about three to five mm apart, so that you have five drains.

On both long sides put three kerbs, like the first course of a wall. Grind two other kerbs in half and use them to start the top courses of your side walls, following with two full kerbs and a last half, overlapping the first row. Drill through the upper course and halfway down the lower with an 8 mm masonry bit. Do this for all kerbs but drill carefully because they break easily (I lost two). Now remove the kerbs to dress their narrow bottoms with adhesive. Stick the first course onto the gravel tiles and then stick the second course on top.

Cut the reinforcement bars into 20 cm pieces. Put these gently into the holes in the upper kerbs, tapping through to pin to the lower kerbs. Grind four 40 cm pieces of kerb for the trough ends. In the corners, drill holes (carefully!) through the side courses into the 40 cm pieces. Insert a plug and connect with a 120 mm screw. Cross-brace the side walls with threaded stainless steel pieces one third of the way from each end of your trough, pierced through the kerbs and secured with nuts. If you drill from the inside out, it will be possible to pierce a bigger hole on the outside so that you can disguise the nuts.

After all this, rub all gaps with adhesive so that everything sits well together. The next day, use half tiles or kerb pieces with mortar to lay an oblique fillet in the bottom corner



Mortared fillet with chicken mesh



Application of gruel-soaked cloth

against the walls. Lock chicken mesh in the upper mortar. The loose mesh should come up over the tops of the side walls. Make sure you have a large piece of plastic around the trough so that you do not mess up the ground.

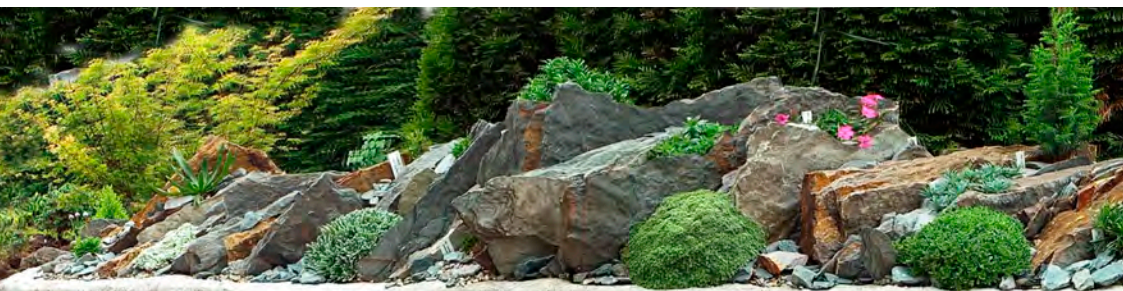
The next day, make the mortar soft enough to 'slam' through the chicken mesh at the trough top. Smear about a centimetre of mortar over the top of the rim, so that the edge is roughly 9 cm wide. This does not have to be perfect or too smooth, it being better to seek the appearance of a natural handmade trough.

## Stage Two - the Exterior

We may now give the exterior an old handmade appearance. Nevertheless, do not use your hands – wear protective gloves! Cement is hazardous.

- Necessities for a first mix (you need three mixes):
- In the wheelbarrow - 1 use an old measuring cup of half a litre.
- 9 x Portland cement
- 2 x peat
- 2 x cement / sand
- 1 x adhesive

Mix the ingredients well and add water to create a thin gruel. Before applying the towels and gruel it is helpful to dampen the outside of the trough for better adhesion. Dip the first towel in the gruel and work it in well so that the entire fabric is soaked. If you find any dry pieces of mixture while doing this, add a little more water. Once the cloth is well soaked, grasp its corners, lower it to the ground on the outside and then bring it in over the top of the trough. Then press it down and ensure it is sticking



everywhere. Continue applying gruelled cloth layers until you have worked right round the trough. Leave your efforts to cure and dry in the shade and not in the sun.

After a few hours you can update the outer surfaces at your own discretion with a brush and water. The next day, remove the plastic from the base of the trough and cut away excess cement. Ideally, leave a few days for everything to cure completely. Your trough is ready!

### Stage Three - Filling and Planting

Fill the bottom with a layer of potsherd on anti-root fabric. Then fill with your chosen mixture. I use 25% sand from the garden, 25% Japanese split 2-6 mm, 25% coarse river sand or crusher sand, and 25% improved garden soil and clay. In the winter, I cover the trough for protection from rain and snow.



Potsherd drainage

#### Some of the plants I chose for my masterwork trough were:

*Ajuga pyramidalis* 'Metallica Crispa'

*Armeria juniperifolia* 'Brookside'

*Asyneuma pulvinatum*

*Azorella filamentosa*

*Benthamiella patagonica*

*Burkartia lanigera*

*Calceolaria fothergillii*

*Campanula asperuloides*

*Celmisia argentea*

*Clematis marmoraria*

*Crassula exilis* ssp. *sedifolia*

*Crassula setulosa* var. *curta*

*Dianthus microlepis* 'Rivendell'

*Dianthus haematocalyx* ssp. *ventricosus*

*Schivereckia doerfleri*

*Dianthus haematocalyx* ssp. *pinidicola*

*Dianthus haematocalyx* ssp. *alpinus*

*Dionysia aretioides* 'Bevere'

*Dianthus repens*

*Ewartia planchonii*

*Helichrysum* 'County Park Silver'

*Juniperus communis* 'Compressa'

*Lysimachia japonica*

*Minuartia uniflora*

*Ramberlea* 'Inchgarth'

*Raoulia australis*

*Santolina chamaecyparissus* 'Small Ness'

*Saxifraga* x *zimmetri*

*Saxifraga longifolia* hybrids

*Scleranthus uniflorus* 'Olive'

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# Celebrating 75 Years of the Edinburgh Show



David Millward

From the founding of the Scottish Rock Garden Club in 1933, its shows have been an outstanding public spectacle of rock garden and related plants, and a celebration of the skills required to grow them. Less than a year after the Club's foundation, shows were held first in Glasgow on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 1934 and then in the New Gallery, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May 1934. Since then a show has been held in Edinburgh every year except during the Second World War and in 1947. So, in 2014 the Edinburgh Show celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> birthday in the traditional manner – with cake. Special prizes of a bottle of champagne were presented to the winners of classes 34 (year of the first show), 75 and 81 (age of the Club). By coincidence, the recipients were, respectively, Cyril Lafong, the Club's top grower today, Margaret & Henry Taylor who today have probably shown for the greatest number of years, and Sue Simpson, who recently outshone everybody in Section II.

This anniversary coincided with the 'retirement', after 17 years, of the show's longest serving joint show secretaries Carole & Ian Bainbridge. Among the material passed to me on taking on the secretary's role was a list of the show's trophy winners, including names of the plants which had been awarded the Forrest medal. This list was originally made to ensure that a record existed, should the need arise to re-instate any trophies that might become damaged or lost. However, I was fascinated by the list of the Forrest medal-winning plants, and I wanted to learn more about the history of the show and the plants that had contributed to its colour through the years. Here then, is the story of the first 75 years of the Edinburgh show.

## The Pre-war Years

That first Edinburgh show had 50 classes for exhibitors to choose from, including a strong showing for the familiar *Primula*, *Saxifraga*, *Gentiana*, *Lewisia*, *Sempervivum*, and bulbous plants, and the unusual for today's shows, with classes specifically for *Arenaria*, *Silene*, *Asperula*, *Shortia* and *Auricula*. Class 1 was for a miniature rock garden, arranged on a table 3 by 4 feet, an important feature of the pre-war shows. The event was organised by E P Laird, a founding member of the Club and its first secretary. Sadly, only the winner of the most meritorious plant<sup>1</sup> in the show seems to have been recorded and records of other plants shown seem to have been lost.

# Schedule for Second Spring Show

The Show will be held in **THE NEW GALLERY HALL,  
SHANDWICK PLACE, EDINBURGH, on the 9th MAY 1934.**

Entries must reach the Secretary not later than May 6th. 1934.

The Hall will be open for the staging of Exhibits between 5 and 10 p.m. on the 8th May, and from 8 a.m. on the 9th May.

Judging will commence at 10 a.m., and all Exhibitors must leave the Hall with the exception of those officially retained.

Every Exhibit must be removed between 7.30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

**NOTE.**—Except where stated, each Pan must contain **One Distinct** kind or variety, although a Pan may contain more than one plant of that kind.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. A Miniature Rock Garden, to be arranged on table space, 4 ft. by 3 ft.                         | 31. 1 Pan of Bulbous Plants (including Corms).                    |
| 2. A Stone Trough, Sink, or Pan containing more than one kind of Rock Plant, arranged for effect. | 32. 3 Pans of Campanulas.   |
| 3. 6 Pans of Saxifrages.  | 33. 1 Pan of Campanulas.  |
| 4. 3 Pans of Saxifrages.  | 34. 3 Pans of Members of the Campanulaceae (Campanulas excluded.) |
| 5. 1 Pan of Saxifrages.   | 35. 1 Pan of Members of the Campanulaceae (Campanulas excluded).  |
| 6. 6 Pans of Primulas.  | 36. 1 Pan of Schizocodon.   |
| 7. 3 Pans of Primulas.  | 37. 1 Pan of Shortia.   |
| 8. 1 Pan of Primulas.   | 38. 1 Pan of Androsace.   |
| 9. 3 Pans of Gentians.  | 39. 6 Pans of Rock Plants other than the preceding.               |
| 10. 1 Pan of Gentians.  | 40. 3 Pans of Rock Plants other than the preceding.               |
| 11. 3 Pans of Lewisias.   | 41. 1 Pan of Rock Plants other than the preceding.                |
| 12. 1 Pan of Lewisias.  | 42. 1 Pan of Rock Plants personally collected by the Exhibitor.   |
| 13. 6 Pans of Sedums.   | 43. 3 Pans of Dwarf Shrubs, excluding members of the Ericaceae.   |
| 14. 3 Pans of Sedums.   | 44. 1 Pan of Dwarf Shrubs, excluding members of the Ericaceae.    |
| 15. 1 Pan of Sedums.  | 45. 3 Pans of Rock Plants with silver grey foliage.               |
| 16. 6 Pans of Sempervivums.   | 46. 1 Pan of Rock Plants with silver grey foliage.                |
| 17. 3 Pans of Sempervivums.   | 47. 3 Pans of Auriculas.  |
| 18. 1 Pan of Sempervivums.  | 48. 1 Pan of Auriculas.   |
| 19. 3 Pans of Composites.   | 49. 3 Pans of Dwarf Rhododendrons.                                |
| 20. 1 Pan of Composites.  | 50. 1 Pan of Dwarf Rhododendrons.                                 |
| 21. 3 Pans of Arenarias.  |   |
| 22. 1 Pan of Arenarias.   |   |
| 23. 3 Pans of Silenes.  |   |
| 24. 1 Pan of Silenes.   |   |
| 25. 3 Pans of Dianthus.   |   |
| 26. 1 Pan of Dianthus.  |   |
| 27. 1 Pan of Asperula.  |   |
| 28. 3 Pans of Ericaceous Plants other than those for which there are classes.                     |   |
| 29. 1 Pan of Ericaceous Plants other than those for which there are classes.                      |   |
| 30. 3 Pans of Bulbous Plants (including Corms).   |   |

Schedule courtesy of RBGE Archive

Except for the war years, the Edinburgh show was then held in the Waverley Market adjacent to the railway station in central Edinburgh from 1937 until 1950, an ideal location, particularly for those travelling to the show by train. Exhibitors living at a distance from the show venue were encouraged to send their exhibits and the committee would stage the plants and arrange their return afterwards. Classes in these early shows were contained within a single section but the current structure had evolved by

1948. The first change was in 1938 when a class was introduced specifically for exhibitors who had not previously won an award. Then in 1939 a separate group of 'special classes for novices' was included, comprising ones for saxifrages, auriculas, polyanthuses and cacti or succulents.

That first one-day show must have been a success because in subsequent pre-war years the event was held over two days. The 1935 show was said to have attracted 570 visitors. However, information about most of the pre-war shows is incomplete, with only the trophy-winning plants known from 1937, 1939 and 1940. The report for 1938 describes 18 stands, mostly from nurseries, but it is unclear whether these were trade exhibits or entries in the miniature garden class. A detailed account of the 1939 show was written at the time but was never published, with the Journal editor confessing in 1946 that, "as the event took place a long time ago it seems hardly necessary to include them now"! A small show was held in Edinburgh in 1940, but none was held from 1941 to 1945 when horticultural efforts turned to food production during the Second World War<sup>2</sup>.

The first full report was published for 1936, giving an impression of the range of plants grown at that time. Mr & Mrs J T Renton of Branklyn won a Forrest medal with *Rhododendron forrestii* var. *repens* and the K C Corsar Challenge trophy. Their 6-pan entry for the latter included *Androsace ciliata* with 42 rosettes covered in flowers. The backbone of the show seems to have been *Saxifraga*, including *S. 'Faldonside'*, *S. burseriana*, *S. stribrnyi* and *S. federici-augusti* ssp. *grisebachii* 'Wisley', along with European primulas, *PP. allionii*, x *pubescens* 'Mrs J H Wilson', 'Marven', and 'Linda Pope'. Drabas were considered to be promising show plants, with *Draba*

Dr Henry Tod (second from left) was show secretary after WWII, also serving as convener and club president. He was much sought after as a judge and is seen here at an Aberdeen show with (left to right): Jack Crosland, Harold Esslemont, Mrs Dias and John Duff. Image courtesy of Aberdeen Journals





*polytricha*, *D. dedeana*, *D. rigida* and *D. imbricata*. The bulb classes attracted few entries and no plants were apparently worthy of mention. More popular were classes for Gesneriads, *Shortia*, *Lewisia*, *Sedum* and *Sempervivum*. A class for rock plants collected by the exhibitor included *Antennaria dioica* and *Lycopodium clavatum*.

## The Post-war Shows

Following the end of the war, the club did much to revive the interest in rock gardening. The 1946 show was a modest one-day affair, but Major & Mrs Walmsley's *Phyllodoce nipponica* not only gained a Forrest medal but also received the Farrer medal from the Alpine Garden Society in London and a first-class certificate from the RHS. In 1947 a show in Edinburgh had been planned, but had to be cancelled at short notice because the venue became unavailable<sup>3</sup>.

Drs Henry & Mary Tod were instrumental in the growth of the local groups in the Lothians and the revival of shows after the war. Henry was Edinburgh show secretary for six years from 1948 and subsequently for the Penicuik show, but was also in demand as a judge and served as club president (1961-63) and vice-president (1964-1974). Professionally, Henry Tod was a distinguished chemist and soil scientist, and Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. As a skilled grower with an interest in plants introduced from Turkey and North America, he combined his expertise to contribute much to the club journal as well.

The two-day show in 1948 attracted more than 2000 visitors to view the 180 entries from 22 exhibitors. The following year's event was expanded to three days and saw more than 2800 visitors. Entries continued to rise with 337 from 50 competitors in 1952. This compares with 322 entries from 38 competitors in 2014, the best of recent years. Following the introduction of a novice section in 1939, Section II has been part of the schedules since 1948. At first it was for members who had not won a prize at the previous year's shows. A limit of 3 first prizes won at SRGC shows was set in 1951 and this rose to 6 in 1959, 10 in 1970, 25 in 1986 and 50 in 2014.

In 1951 the show moved from Waverley Market to the Music Hall and Assembly Room in George Street, Edinburgh where it remained until 1968. The poor lighting was remarked as "*making the competitive displays almost invisible*"; extra lighting was added for the following year. Clearly, finding a suitable venue with good natural lighting has always been a challenge, though we are lucky with our current location in Fairmilehead. Despite the drop in gate numbers as a result of the move, and the upstairs location for some of the displays, the George Street venue was considered a more pleasant location and more of a social occasion than the "*chilly wastes of the (Waverley) Market*"! The upstairs location for part of the show clearly posed problems, as it did again between 1988 and 1994 when it was held in Cluny Church Centre, Morningside. The solution in

1952 was provided by a company who installed a mechanical hoist to lift materials to the upper floor.

The mid-week, three-day format continued during the 1950s, except for the two-day late spring show of 1954, before returning once again to 2 days from 1962. In 1961 the third international rock garden plant conference was held in Edinburgh, organised by the Edinburgh committee and the Edinburgh trophies were awarded. Trade exhibits were encouraged with medals awarded for built-up rock gardens, plants exhibited in pots and floral displays. By 1951 trade exhibitors were coming from as far as Covent Garden (Barr & Sons), Stevenage (Six Hills Nursery) and Silverdale in Lancashire (Reginald Kaye). There were demonstrations, for example on rock garden or peat wall construction. Evening talks were first introduced in 1948 and delivered by such luminaries as Alf Evans on peat wall construction and planting, Peter H Davis on plant hunting in the eastern Mediterranean and Donald Lowndes on his plant hunting expedition to Nepal. In 1951 the show was held in conjunction with that of the National Cactus and Succulent Society and from 1953 to 1958 with the Scottish Rhododendron Show.

With the subsequent decline in showing, 1974 became a landmark for the Edinburgh show because it was reduced to one-day and for the first time was held on a Saturday rather than mid-week. This was also the year that the Penicuik and Edinburgh shows combined, at first as a trial to provide an early bulb and rock plant show with many more classes, particularly for bulbous plants. The success led to this to becoming the Edinburgh and Midlothian show. The Penicuik show had been instigated as a county show in 1954, becoming a full club event in 1957. An early date (23<sup>rd</sup> March) was selected for the merged show, matching previous events in Penicuik and to reflect the feeling of members that the shows were becoming too bunched. A late March to early April date has been preferred since, though a handful of shows have been held into early June. The present name, the 'Edinburgh and the Lothians Show', dates from 2001.

Until 1968 the Edinburgh show had been held in a central location but increasing costs forced a move to premises in the suburbs. Napier Technical College (now University), Collinton, was the venue from 1968 to 1971 before a return to the more central former Royal High School, buildings in Regent Road from 1972, and to Cowan House at the University of Edinburgh's Pollock Halls residences from 1977. 1980 saw a permanent move to the outer parts of the city, first to St Ninian's Church Hall, Corstorphine, then to Cluny Church Centre in Morningside in 1988 and finally to our current location in Fairmilehead in 1995.

Overall, the character of the schedules has remained remarkably similar, changes in total class numbers and titles usually reflecting changes in timing within the season and of show secretary. The table garden of the pre-war shows did not survive into the post-war era. The 'new, rare or difficult' classes were instigated in 1950 and those 'from seed' in 1960. Despite

the few major bulb winners, there have always been significant numbers of classes specifically for these. Classes for plants native to Scotland have featured since the early days, but it wasn't until the late 1980s that classes for plants specific to other countries or continents were included and these have proved popular ever since. Traditionally, Scottish shows have not placed any limit to the size of pan used but, to celebrate the Club's Jubilee, a "small six" for pans not exceeding 6 inches in diameter (17.5 cm from 2000) was introduced in 1993 in both sections I and II.

## The Trophies

The number of trophies awarded at the Edinburgh Show has grown over the years. The oldest is the K C Corsar Challenge trophy. Donated in 1935 by Kenneth C Corsar, the first<sup>4</sup> Edinburgh show secretary, journal editor and, later, president; the trophy was given along with a silver medal for the class of 6 pans of rock plants. Corsar was an expert on growing primulas, particularly auriculas, and in 1972 the trophy designation was changed to the class for 3 pans *Primula*, then in 1980 to that for 2 pans *Primula* and from 1986 to the best European or American *Primula* in the show.

Three of the trophies are associated with Drs Henry and Mary Tod. Henry Tod donated the Carnethy Medal in 1948 to be awarded at the Edinburgh Show for 3 pans rock plants. It was named after the place the Tods lived and the eponymous summit in the nearby Pentland Hills. In 1976, the Edinburgh group replaced the medal with the Henry Tod Carnethy memorial quaich in his honour. Since 1980 the quaich has been awarded for the best bulb, corm or tuber in section I. A wide range of bulbous species has won the award, including the famed Chilean 'crocus' *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus*, large pans of which have won five times since 1999. However, contrary to the award criteria for 'best bulb, corm or tuber', the judges have also awarded the trophy to the wonderful *Oncoclytus Iris acutiloba lineolata*, twice to an orchid and to trilliums on five other occasions!

When the Penicuik and Edinburgh shows combined, the former's two trophies, the Midlothian vase and Midlothian bowl were adopted. The vase was presented by Henry and at first in the combined show it was awarded to the best plant exhibited by a member resident in Midlothian and Peeblesshire. Since 1977 the trophy has been awarded for the best *Rhododendron*. The Midlothian bowl was presented by Dr Mary Tod and was awarded at the combined show to the resident of Midlothian and Peeblesshire gaining the most points. From 1977 it was awarded to the recipient of the best plant in Section II.

Historically, the most interesting of the trophies is the R E Cooper Bhutan drinking cup (photo). This was presented to the club in 1955 by R E Cooper, one of the founding members. The Maharajah of Bhutan gave the cup to Cooper during his 1914-15 collecting expedition to that country,

at a time when its flora was little known<sup>5</sup>. The cup was awarded initially for the best species *Primula*. However, as European or American species succeeded on only a handful of occasions, the designation inevitably changed in 1986 to best Asiatic *Primula*. The role of honour includes such legendary Himalayan and Chinese plants as *PP. sherriffiae*, *aureata* (five times), *sonchifolia* (twice), *gracilipes* (three times), *bhutanica* and *forrestii* (three times). The most recent winners include the related *PP. bracteata* (twice) and *henricii* (three times). In 1973, the centenary year of George Forrest's birth, the Bhutan drinking cup was awarded for *Primula forrestii*; coincidentally (or not), *Pleione forrestii* won the Forrest medal that same year.

Henry Archibald presented the eponymous rose bowl in 1952 to be awarded for the winner of the Section I class for 3 rock plants of generally easy cultivation, and grown in the open garden. In 1955 this was moved

The R E Cooper Bhutan drinking cup (Photo: Liz Cole)



to the winner of the equivalent class in Section II. The trophy was brought back to Section I in 1980 and has since been awarded for 3 pans rock plants of distinct genera. Unfortunately, few of the winning plants before 1975 have been recorded. Archibald was a club committee member from 1936-50, after which he became vice-president until his death in 1959. An avid exhibitor, Archibald won the Bhutan drinking cup in 1959 with *Primula aureata*, was a 6-times winner of the K C Corsar Challenge trophy, and received the Forrest medal in 1948 for *Daphne petraea*.

A number of new trophies were added in the mid 1950s. Randle (R B) Cooke, of *Meconopsis x cookei* fame, presented the Kilbryde Cup in 1955 and it has been awarded for an arrangement of cut flowers and foliage of rock plants. The trophy refers to Cooke's renowned rhododendron garden at Prospect Hill, south of Corbridge in Northumberland<sup>6</sup>. Cooke was an extremely successful exhibitor at Edinburgh between 1938 and 1961,

*Primula sherriffiae* (RBGE, 2013. Photo: Peter Maguire)



winning both the K C Corsar Challenge trophy and the Carnethy medal twice, the Bhutan drinking cup 3 times and the Elsie Harvey memorial trophy. His plants were awarded Forrest medals at Edinburgh in 1938 and 1950. He bred many splendid *Cassiope* hybrids and he received a certificate of merit in 1960 for *Cassiope wardii*, a plant he grew well at Kilbryde.

The Reid rose bowl was first awarded in 1956; it was presented by Alex D Reid MBE, born in NW England, lived in Edinburgh and later in Aberdeen, where he was show secretary. An engineer by profession he had a lifelong interest in horticulture and specialised in the *Ericaceae*. Between 1952 and 1970 Alex Reid won the K C Corsar Challenge trophy 4 times and the Carnethy medal twice. His two Forrest medals in Edinburgh were for the enigmatic *Primula rockii* in 1953 and *Cassiope wardii* in 1973.

The Boonslie cup was presented in 1956 by Mrs Christina Boyd-Harvey and has always been awarded for the best miniature garden. She and her husband, Squadron-Leader John J Boyd-Harvey, lived at Boonslie in Dirleton, East Lothian, and served the club successively as secretary. Mrs Boyd-Harvey was an accomplished grower and exhibitor, winning the Kilbryde cup in 1955 and later the A O Curle trophy; however, none of her 11 Forrest medals was gained at Edinburgh. No one has won the Boonslie cup more often than the 11 times of Robin Brown of Sandhoe, near Corbridge.

The Elsie Harvey memorial trophy was gifted by Mrs N C Murphy in memory of Miss Elsie Harvey, a member of the Edinburgh group and a regular exhibitor at its shows. The trophy, for 3 pans 'new rare or difficult' plants, was awarded first in 1957. It has consistently been the preserve of the Club's top growers, including Harold Esslemont (12 times winner), Cyril Lafong (11), Jack Crosland (5), Eric Watson (4), Fred Hunt and The Youngs (3). Whilst some new plants introduced in this section have gone on to be regulars in other classes, many of the alpine world's trickiest plants to cultivate have remained here. Notable among the latter are *Jancaea heldreichii*, *Saxifraga florulenta*, *Bryocarpum himalaicum*, *Rhododendron dendrocharis* and many of the Antipodean cushion plants - particularly the 'vegetable sheep'.

The A O Curle memorial trophy was presented in 1960 by Dr & Mrs Simson Hall<sup>7</sup>, leading members of the Edinburgh Group, in celebration of Alexander Ormiston Curle CVO, LLD (1866-1955). A keen grower of alpine plants in his garden at Barnton Avenue, Edinburgh, AO became a successful exhibitor, winning the K C Corsar Challenge trophy twice (1935, 1940) and a Forrest medal in 1940 with *Silene hookeri*. He grew much from seed and this silver plate accompanied the introduction of the class for 3 pans of rock plants, distinct, grown from seed by the exhibitor. His alpine house was said to contain "whole battalions of small inconspicuous plants, quite uninteresting to the layman, all lined up and ticketed like a case of fine flint arrowheads"<sup>8</sup>. The quotation is from a fellow professional

of Curle, writing after his death. Curle was a qualified lawyer, antiquary and field archaeologist who contributed significantly to our understanding of Scottish prehistory. He was a distinguished public servant, serving as director of the Royal Scottish Museum (now part of the National Museums Scotland) from 1916 until retirement in 1931. A O Curle was president of the club from 1936 to 1939 and vice-president 1946-1955.

The two most recent trophies also celebrate members of the Edinburgh group. The Alfred Evans quaich was donated by the Edinburgh group in 2002 to be awarded for the best pan of *Ericaceae* other than *Rhododendron*. Evans was the assistant curator at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and was a key figure in the club, becoming its president (1973-6), and afterwards honorary vice-president and honorary president. The designation celebrates his expertise in - and championing of - the *Ericaceae*. Winning plants have included wonderful specimens of *Epigaea gaultherioides*, *Arctica nana* 'Redshank', *Rhodothamnus chamaecistus* and *Andromeda polifolia* 'Nikko'. The Bill Mackie quaich was presented in 2003 by Mrs June Mackie in memory of Bill and has been awarded for the best pan of *Saxifraga*. The Mackies were stalwarts of the Edinburgh group. Winning plants have included *S. georgei* on three occasions and the dark form of the lovely *S. dinnikii*, a recent introduction from the Caucasus.

## The Forrest Medal

That most desirable of Chinese *Primula*-related species, *Omphalogramma vinciflora*, has the honour of having been awarded the very first 'Forrest' at Edinburgh. In appreciation of the famous Scottish explorer's efforts to enrich our gardens, the club had set up from the outset the George Forrest memorial prize fund, through subscription from members, the interest from which was to be used for the award. Forrest medals have been awarded at every Edinburgh show since, to a total of 45 exhibitors. Of these, 31 have won once, 6 twice, two 3 times (The Knox-Finlays, Fred Hunt), and two (Inshriach Nursery, Eric Watson) 4 times. However, without doubt, the outstanding medallists at Edinburgh are Harold Esslemont with 8 between 1958 and 1971, and Cyril Lafong with 9 (and counting?) between 2001 and 2015.

The show rules and schedules confirm that the award has always been for the "most meritorious plant in the show", specifically including trade exhibits in the early days. Yet it is often claimed that some plants then gaining the Forrest medal were far from fulfilling this criterion, with rarity perhaps playing a much bigger role in the judges' minds than it does today. Undoubtedly on occasions, some small, rare and unusual plant with only a handful of flowers gained the award over a large, well-grown and more common specimen. For example, in 1963 a small and not particularly well-flowered plant of the Mount Damavand form of *Dionysia aretioides* was awarded the medal<sup>9</sup>. This was a novel introduction from seed collected in

Iran. By contrast, the 1968 winner, *Primula* 'Linda Pope' was a sizeable, well-flowered specimen<sup>10</sup>. Reading the report many years after the event it seems inexplicable why, for example in 1980, *Androsace strigillosa* was preferred over a 25 cm diameter pot of *Calceolaria darwinii* with well over 100 flowers! No explanation is given, but in retrospect it is not possible to know the condition of the plants. Therefore, I have taken the awards at face value, suspecting there have always been some outstanding exhibits that have not been justly acclaimed.

Plants receiving the prestigious award at Edinburgh cover many of the families with familiar rock garden plants. Members of the *Primulaceae* have starred an astonishing 25 times, followed by *Ericaceae* on 11 occasions, *Ranunculaceae* on 5, and *Diapensiaceae* and *Asteraceae* each on 3. Many families are represented by one winning species: *Berberidaceae* (*Jeffersonia dubia alba*, 2010), *Boraginaceae* (*Anchusa cespitosa*, 1962), *Caryophyllaceae* (*Silene hookeri*, 1940), *Lamiaceae* (*Lamium armenum*, 2012), *Polemoniaceae* (*Phlox triovulata*, 1966), *Montiaceae* (*Lewisia columbiana* 'Rosea', 1954), *Rosaceae* (*Kelseya uniflora*, 1958), *Scrophulariaceae* (*Verbascum* 'Letitia', 1972), *Saxifragaceae* (*Saxifraga cebennensis*, 1984) and *Thymelaeaceae* (*Daphne petraea*, 1948). There are perhaps some surprises in that list, but even more so is that no plant belonging to the *Iridaceae*, *Gentianaceae*, *Campanulaceae*, *Fabaceae* or *Brassicaceae* has the award.

Clearly, the judges' eyes have been mesmerised by stunning well flowered cushions within the *Primulaceae*. Those difficult but desirable dionysias won 8 awards between 1965 and 2005, notably through skilled cultivation by Eric Watson whose 4 medals were all awarded for this genus. *Androsace* (including *Douglasia*) has 6 medals, of which 3 belong to *A. vandellii* (1961, 2007, 2008) and one each to *A. muscoidea* forma *longiscapa* (2009), *Douglasia laevigata* (1964) and *A. strigillosa* (1980), the last a non-cushion Himalayan species and the only one of these comfortable when grown in the open garden.

Primulas have eight 'Forrests'. The list includes the legendary *P. sherriffiae* (1974), exhibited by the RBGE. The first primula to achieve the award was in 1938 but it is unclear from the report which of the two species that merited special mention was the winner; *PP. glabra* or *bellidifolia* ssp. *hyacinthina*. Asiatic species have dominated: *P. sonchifolia* (1949), followed by *P. reptans* (1951) and *P. rockii* (1953). *Primula* 'Linda Pope' (1968, 1988) is the only European or American *Primula* to have achieved the premier award.

For the *Ericaceae*, *Cassiope* has five awards including *C.* 'Muirhead' (1955), *C. wardii* (1970) and *C. selaginoides* LS13284 (1985). *Rhododendron* has just two awards though the genus has featured prominently in many more shows: *R. forrestii repens* for Mr & Mrs J T Renton (1936) and *R. cephalanthum* 'Crebreflorum' (1963).

Bulbous plants have won the premier award on only eight occasions: *Nomocharis aperta* (1935, 1939), *Fritillaria gibbosa* (1969), *Cyclamen*

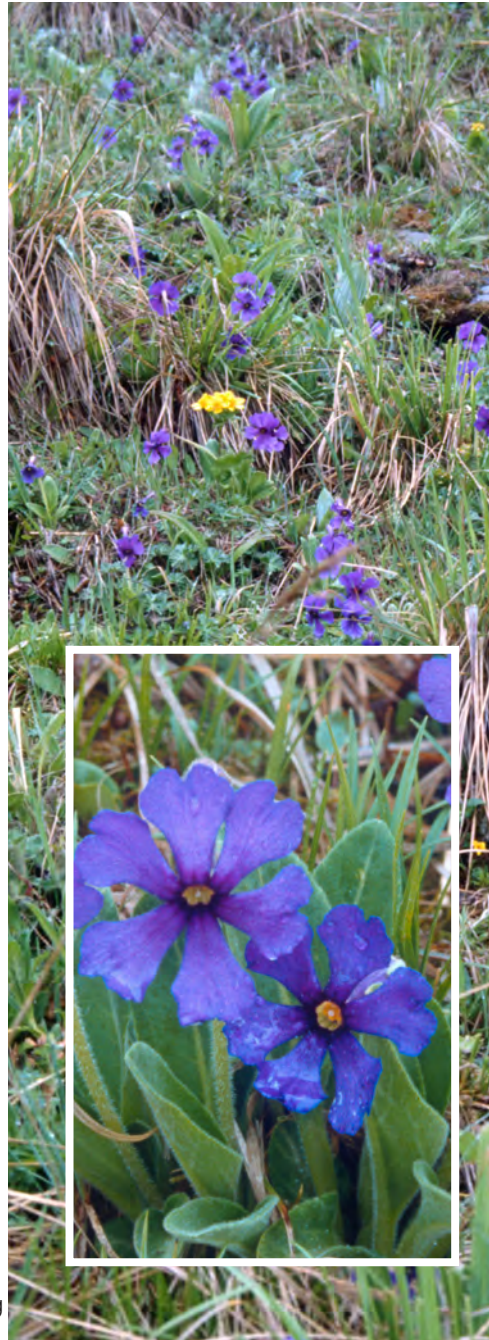


*hederifolium* (1971), *F. conica* (1996), *Narcissus mesatlanticus* var. *romieuxii* SF151 (1997), *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* (1999, 2002) and *N. obesus* 'Lee Martin' form (2011). The winning cyclamen was at the one autumn show held in Edinburgh – 1971, the year of the fourth international conference – and Harold Esslemont's plant was described as "over a foot across, quite uniform in height, and at the peak of perfection", the last surely a prerequisite for the accolade. The orchids are not true bulbs, but only *Pleione* has had success, on four occasions: *P. limprichtii* (1960), *P. forrestii* (1973), *P. x 'Shantung'* (2006) and *P. x 'Britannia Doreen'* (2016).

Remarkably, despite considerable interest in plants from the Antipodes shown in the rest of the awards, only *Leucogenes leontopodium* (1967) and *Clematis x cartmanii* 'Joe' (1991) representing New Zealand, and *Gaultheria mucronata* (1981) and *Tecophilaea cyanocrocus* (1999, 2002) from South America, have achieved the accolade.

Because of its legendary difficulty in flowering it well in cultivation, *Paraquilegia* not surprisingly appears in the list only twice (1956, 1986). However, no single species has won more often than the five times of *Pulsatilla vernalis*: in 1989 it was exhibited by Sandy Leven, in 1992 by Bryan Graham, and in 2001, 2003 and 2004 by Cyril Lafong. Bryan Graham's plant was remarkable in that it was from Section II and, of course, Cyril's outstanding plant is recorded for posterity in Sandy Leven's Forrest medal reports on the club's website<sup>11</sup>.

*Omphalogramma vinciflora* on the Balang Shan, Sechuan



## Reflections of the World of Rock Garden Plants in the Show

Like many facets of life, gardening and showing are subject to fashion, with plants passing in and out of favour, and perhaps even returning at a later date. However, a review of just one of our club's shows cannot identify those trends with any certainty, particularly as the reports do not necessarily reflect the true breadth of what is grown and are also the writer's personal reflection of what was on display. Then, there are the factors influencing what is shown, such as the season, the availability from nurseryman or seed sources such as collecting expeditions to new regions. Furthermore, the date of the Edinburgh show has changed from time to time. So, what follows is my personal selection to illustrate the changing colour of the Edinburgh Show over its first 75 years.

Most admired plants at the first international rock garden conference in London during early May 1936 were *Corydalis cashmeriana*, *Fritillaria liliacea*, *Omphalogramma vinciflora*, *Daphne petraea* var. *grandiflora*, plus the notoriously difficult *Primula wigramiana* and *P. gambeliana*. These are all challenging plants to grow and that is perhaps one of the major characteristics of the club's shows right from the outset: for example *Raoulia eximia* and *Jancaea heldreichii* in 1948. However, the backbone of the show before the war was provided by classes for saxifrages, primulas, auriculas (both show and alpine), *Polyanthus*, double primroses, sedums and sempervivums, including 6- or 4-pan classes for many of these. Saxifrages have not featured so strongly since that time though there are always some on the bench.

Classes for dwarf rhododendrons have been included in the schedules from the outset and specimens were also shown in many of the six and three pan entries. In addition to the Forrest medal-winning species mentioned above, most rhododendrons shown until the late 1990s were species or forms. In 1936 the rhododendrons exhibited included *RR. ciliatum*, *forrestii* var. *repens*, *keiskei*, *lepidotum*, *pemakoense* and *racemosum*. Forms seen during the 1950s and 1960s included *R. racemosum* 'Ward's Form', *R. uniflorum* var. *imperator*, *R. cephalanthum*, *R. hanceanum* 'Nanum' and *R. 'Obtusum'*. The wonderful Nepalese *Rhododendron lowndesii*, introduced in 1954, made a singular appearance in 1959, shown by R B Cooke. In the 1990s *R. pemakoense* won the Midlothian vase on five occasions. However, by the late 1990s onwards it has been more common to see hybrid forms such as 'Lady Anne Fitzwilliam', 'Lucy Lou' and 'Dora Amateis', though *R. megeratum* 'Bodnant' was a worthy winner in 2014.

Primulas have always been popular at Edinburgh. In 1977 it was reported that there were some 60 pans of Asiatic and European primulas; comparably, there were 62 in the *Primula* classes alone in 2014. The impression gained from show reports is that Asiatic species dominated after the war when their variety and availability greatly increased through the recent expeditions to the Himalaya and China. *Primula aureata* was first reported from 1951 and has performed well since though it is not often

seen now, with *Primula rockii* only making a brief appearance in 1952 and 1953. Visitors were then treated to a wealth of wonderful species, including: *PP. bhutanica*, *bracteosa*, *edgeworthii*, *edgeworthii alba*, *gracilipes*, *reidii* var. *williamsii*, *sonchifolia*, *tsariensis* and *whitei*. The numbers of Asiatic primulas on the bench declined in the 1990s, so much so that the Bhutan drinking cup was not awarded in 1993 and 1995. In the last ten years the Asiatic *Primula* classes have been dominated by *P. bracteata* and *P. henricii*; *Primula* 'Netta Dennis' (*P. aureata* x *gracilipes*) is seen from time to time. The brilliant *P. maximowiczii* has been seen in early seasons, though it is typically later.

No such decline has been seen in the European primulas. *Primula allionii* in its many forms and hybrids seems to have been around always. The older hybrids such as *Primula* x *pubescens* 'Mrs J H Wilson', *P.* 'Linda Pope', *P.* 'Marven' and *P.* 'Beatrice Wooster' have made many appearances, though the last hasn't been seen for some years because of virus infection. These have since been joined by some brilliant hybrids such as the 'Wharfedale' series, 'Aire Mist', 'Tony', 'Clarence Elliott' and 'Broadwell Milkmaid'. The presence of species such as *PP. auricula*, *hirsuta*, *marginata*, *rusbyi*, *veris* and *vulgaris* reminds us of the beauty of the European and American members of the genus as well.

Cushion plants are perhaps thought of as archetypical alpiners and the perfections of form and sheer flower-power are much sought after through skilled growing. Some of the plants shown in recent years have been simply awesome. *Androsace vandellii* has been shown in most post-war shows and common reference is made to *AA. pyrenaica* and *ciliata*; more recently there have been some enormous cushions, for example of *A. muscoidea* 'Millenium Dome'. *Dionysia curviflora* has been in cultivation since 1932 and it was first reported from the show in 1953. *Dionysia* collections from Iran by Paul Furse in 1961 led to seed being available in the UK and only four years later in 1965 *Dionysia aretioides* won the Forrest medal. As growers such as Eric Watson learnt the skills to succeed with these plants, more and more species featured in the early spring shows of the 1970s and 1980s: *DD. bryoides*, *freitagii*, *involucrata*, *michauxii*, *microphylla*, *tapetodes* and *viscidula*. The first of the hybrids *Dionysia viscidula* x *freitagii* appeared as a winner at the show in 1995 and others such as 'Ewesley Sigma' and 'Monika' followed. *Dionysia* cultivation remains in the hands of a few very skilled growers.

Patagonian and Australasian alpiners began winning the new, rare or difficult classes in 1962, notably through the efforts of Harold Esslemont and Jack Crosland. Species grown included: *Haastia pulvinaris*, *Leucogenes leontopodium*, *Myosotis eximia*, *Nassauvia revoluta*, *Nardophyllum bryoides*, *Ourisia ruellioides*, *Raoulia eximia*, *R. grandiflora*, and *R. mammillaris*. Some of these plants are illustrated accompanying the show reports<sup>12</sup>. The Aberdeen 'tradition' of successfully cultivating these challenging plants was continued through Ian and Maggi Young in the

1990s. *Celmisia philocremna* and *Raoulia x loganii* were first seen in the late 1970s and *Clematis marmoraria*, *C. petriei* and *C. x cartmanii* 'Joe' in the late 1980s. Seed of more South American plants became available in the 1990s through John Watson and included the cushion benthemiellas, whilst that incredible South African member of the gentian family, *Sebaea thomasii*, first appeared as a winner in 1997.

Trilliums have been grown in British gardens for much longer than a century, not surprisingly because the genus dates from Linnaeus. Yet they don't seem to have made an impact at our show prior to *Trillium rivale* in 1973. However, from 1977 the smaller species *Trillium nivale*, *T. rivale*, *T. hibbersonii*, *T. pusillum* and the various forms of *T. grandiflorum* have appeared regularly and make great show plants. Specific classes for these plants were introduced at Edinburgh in 2001 to encourage their continued appearance.

Despite the plentiful supply of bulbs, corms and tubers from the trade stands and the award of two Forrest medals to *Nomocharis aperta* in pre-war shows, bulbous plants received very few mentions in reports from the late 40s until the mid 1960s. One can be forgiven for thinking that there might have been some form of discrimination here – from the earliest days there have been classes for bulbous plants in the schedules. There are glimpses of hope though, for example in 1958 when *Narcissus rupicola*, *N. bulbocodium* ssp. *tenuifolius*, and *Tulipa biflora* were described as outstanding. Bulbs featured strongly in the Penicuik show and when the two shows combined in 1974 we at last begin to see the significant



contribution that these plants make to our show today. The different species and hybrids grown have expanded enormously since 1974 particularly with *Narcissus*, *Fritillaria* and *Corydalis*; 16 varieties of the last were seen in 2004. Furthermore, during the last ten years or so, exhibitors and visitors have been delighted by the wonderful displays of bulbous plants in special exhibits by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. The quality of the plants shown in the RBGE displays has been recognised with professional medals awarded for *Iris willmottiana* (2011), *Narcissus bulbocodium* (2014) and *Erythronium multiscapideum* (2015), as being of equivalent standard to the Forrest medal plant on the day.

Fritillaries were first mentioned in reports in 1965 when a number of new BSBE (Bowles Scholarship Botanical Expedition) species from Iran such as *F. olivieri* and *F. graeca* became available. *FF. bucharica*, *citrina*, *pallidiflora* and *pinardii* were mentioned in 1970 and the lovely *F. alburyana* from NE Turkey in 1979. The popularity of fritillaries grew during the 1990s and the number of dedicated classes was doubled to four in 1998. This is reflected in the show reports for 1992 when eight species of *Fritillaria* were mentioned, and for 2000 and 2004 when a staggering 30 species were on the bench. Fritillaries have been awarded the Henry Tod Carnethy quaiach on ten occasions between 1986 and 2014, and five of these awards were to Fred Hunt, a great grower who did much to promote this genus.

*Iris* always provides impressive displays. *Iris graeberiana* was first reported from the show in 1965. Since then this genus has been mentioned

A typical high quality display from the RBGE



sometimes, but only rarely have the plants been abundant. The list of different forms that have appeared is long: for example *Il. afghanica*, *aucheri*, *iberica* ssp. *elegantissima*, *narynensis*, *nusairiensis*, *pamphylica*, *pumila*, *winogradowii* and 'Sindpers'. The best of *Iris* years at Edinburgh was 2012 with the following all at their best: *Il. attica*, *babadagica*, *bucharica*, *camillae*, *orchioides*, *meda*, *paradoxa* and *sari*.

Only nine of the shows have been held in late May and June, six of them from 1980 to 1985, bringing a different range of plants to the benches. Out went *Dionysia* and the spring bulbs and in came *Phlox*, *Campanula*, *Dianthus*, *Ramonda*, *Jancaea*, *Verbascum*, *Lewisia* and orchids. Western phloxes provide a splash of colour to many late spring rock gardens. *Phlox* shown at Edinburgh at this time have included *P. trioivulata* (1966, 1972, 1980, 1983), *P. 'Wagon Wheel'* (1967); *P. 'Chatahoochee'*, *Phlox nana* var. *ensifolia* (1980-83) and *P. tumulosa* (1990). *Phlox muscooides* was the last reported of this showy genus from an Edinburgh show, in 1993.

## Postscript

Shortly after finishing this article the news was received of the death of J Harley A Milne. He and Winnie supported the show for many years, Harley often serving as a judge. He was show secretary from 1992-1997 and he won the Archibald rose bowl in 1976. After reading a draft of this article he told me that he could well remember the show when it was held in George Street – farewell to this unsung contributor to our story!

I am grateful to Jean Wyllie, Barry & Cathy Caudwell and Leonie Paterson, archivist at the RBGE, for access to show schedules, except for those from 1940 and 1946, copies of which I have not been able to trace.

Weel-kent faces of the Edinburgh show; Harvey Milne is at work in the centre



- 1 The award of a George Forrest memorial medal wasn't mentioned in the show rules and schedule until 1935, though the show report refers to such an award in 1934.
- 2 See Will Ingwerson's article in *Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club*, No 3, pp108-113.
- 3 *Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club*, No 5, Editor's notes
- 4 Kenneth Charles Corsar became show secretary in 1936; for the previous two shows the club secretary E P Laird had officiated at both Glasgow and Edinburgh. Source: show schedules for 1934, 1935.
- 5 Article by Alan Elliott, *The Rock Garden* No 130, 2013.
- 6 See <http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/diaries/Northumberland/+December+/154/> for a recent account
- 7 The post-war membership list shows the Simson Halls as neighbours of A O Curle in Barnton Avenue, Edinburgh. Kathleen Simson Hall was convener of the Edinburgh group 1964-73 and club president 1977-79.
- 8 Ritchie, J N G. 2002. James Curle (1862-1944) and Alexander Ormiston Curle (1866-1955): pillars of the establishment. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 132, 19-41.
- 9 Graham, A. 1956. A memorial of Alexander Ormiston Curle. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Vol. 88 (1954-56), 234-236. Both articles are available on the internet.
- 10 *Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club* No. 37, Fig. 63
- 11 *Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club* No. 43, Fig. 44
- 12 See Sandy Leven's report: <http://www.srgc.org.uk/shows/forrest2004/forrest.html>  
*Journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club* No. 41, Figs 78, 89, 90

### Edinburgh Show Secretaries 1934-2014

R P Laird 1934-35	G Millar 1960-62
K C Corsar 1936-37	Mrs M M W McLeod 1963-69
W F D Fleming 1938-40, 1946	Mrs B B Cormack 1970-77
Dr H Tod 1948-53	J T Aitken 1978-83
Maj-Gen D M Murray-Lyon 1954-55	Dr D Graham 1984-91
R H Hood 1956-57	J H A Milne 1992-97
Mrs D Murphy 1958-59	Drs C & I Bainbridge 1998-2014





Potentilla  
x tonguei

Cyclamen  
purpureum



# Show Reports, 2016

## Ponteland 8<sup>th</sup> October

As always, show day started early, with the weather cool and overcast but dry and we were afforded the luxury of a short walk to the venue from the show secretary's home, as all the paraphernalia went by car. This show, being held jointly by the two sister societies, SRGC and AGS, is almost unique because it can encompass plants from the greater portion of the United Kingdom, while they can be admired for their myriad variety of autumn features - colour, form, texture, tone, tint, and the artistry of the exhibitors who present them for the membership and public to appreciate.

Once staging was finished, it was evident that the benches were well adorned with a great variety of plants: bulbous, herbaceous, trees, shrubs, arranged material, all were in glorious evidence. At one end of the hall were the display boards representing the local group. These were full of really useful information about alpine plants in the wild, how to grow them, and also the group and its activities, all very helpful particularly for beginners and potential members.

In class 9 was a large, handsome pan of *Cyclamen maritimum* shown by Bob & Rannveig Wallis. This venerable plant showed a mass of tight, even and pink flowers on a large tuber, and was ultimately awarded the accolade of a Farrer medal.

By the same exhibitors, as part of a three-pan exhibit in class 19, were *Rhodophiala bifida* and *Narcissus obsoletus*, in complete contrast to each other and not seen on the bench that often. The *Rhodophiala*, with scarlet open-faced flowers is best grown in the bulb house in an open and leafy mix. The *Narcissus*, with its diminutive shiny white propellers was very dainty. It grows in a standard gritty bulb compost and needs to be pot-bound to flower.

In class 27 was a very large pot of *Euonymus alatus* 'Compactus' in full autumn colour, with all its leaves showing dark, crimson to scarlet, and very dramatic; at home we also grow this plant in the border and although it doesn't exceed one metre in height it is very wide and has something to offer in each season, with flowers and fruit as well as winter tracery. This specimen was exhibited by Stan Da Prato.

Class 35 was for one rock plant in fruit, cone or seed, and Robin Pickering's plant of *Picea abies* 'Pusch' showed lots of perfectly proportioned fawn-coloured cones against tiny, bright green needles, a forest tree in miniature. In class 52 was *Fuchsia* 'Lottie Hobby', shown by Mala Janes. Everything about this plant is tiny - leaves, flowers and little black shiny berries. As a shrub, this plant has a lot to offer and deserves to be much better known. It starts to flower very early, often in April; its

Facing: Cut flowers at Ponteland



*Rhodophiala bifida*  
Facing: *Fuchsia* 'Lottie Hobby'

glossy little leaves take on butter-yellow tints in autumn; and it carries on until the first frosts. It is hardy when planted in the ground, will grow in part to dappled shade as an understory plant, and will manage on most soils apart from very wet or very dry. Altogether it is an amenable little plant.

A plant of note in class 58 was *Cyclamen hederifolium* 'Ivy Ice Rose' shown by Tommy Anderson. The flowers were very even and of an unusual shade of soft magenta pink with paler edges along the petals, giving the whole plant an elegant appearance. By way of contrast, one particular plant in class 61, three pans hardy ferns, was *Adiantum reniforme* shown by Brian & Sheila Smethurst. This plant is the tidiest and neatest *Adiantum* I have seen to date. It is naturally a slow-growing little fern with dainty, kidney-shaped and dark green leaves edged reddish-brown. Grown in a cold frame in a compost with lots of leaf mould, this is a plant that does nothing in a hurry, but is worth the wait.

An elegant bulbous plant in class 72 was *Habranthus martinezii* shown by Alan Newton. This plant comes from South America and is one of several species of 'windflowers' that require warm and dry summer dormancy, then rapidly come to life after the first watering. Timing is therefore crucial; if it is mistakenly watered early, it will start to flower, quickly pushing up the normally white, in this case pink, goblet-shaped blooms into the light. Grown in an alpine house or frame in a gritty compost, this plant is a hardy good-doer that will increase by bulb and seed.

In class 79 was *Viola hederacea* exhibited by Mike Dale. This little violet comes from Tasmania and South Australia, is hardy outside and



is much better behaved than some of its European cousins, as it rarely sets seed, instead making runners on slender stems which allow it to have a trailing habit over a pot or trough. The mauve and white flowers are produced in succession, giving a long flowering period, and it is best grown in a gritty compost mix.





*Habranthus martinezii*  
Facing: *Cyclamen maritimum*  
Rhodes form, Farrer medal winner

The overview of the whole of class 83 demonstrates very well the autumn colour theme. The plants exhibited were: two pans of *Aruncus aethusifolius* by Alan Newton and Brian & Sheila Smethurst, a *Sorbus poteriifolia* by Ian Leslie, an *Arcterica nana* by Mala Janes, and a *Sedum sieboldii* by Ian Instone. All the plants in this class reflected the change of season and its effect on them.

In class 87 was a pan of the orchid *Anoectochilus formosanus*, shown by Alan Newton. This plant is new in cultivation and not that easy to grow. It comes from China and Taiwan and needs to be kept frost-free because it is never completely dry. It is grown in a mix of pumice, leaf mould and Seramis, and it requires rainwater. The flowers are apparently very intricate and delicate so a challenge too, no doubt.

A collection of five cut alpine plants in class 94 was shown by Mala Janes. This exhibit demonstrated the variety of plants that could grow in the open garden and contribute to the autumn theme. There were fluffy seed heads, split seed capsules with colour contrast, capsules with different form and texture: *Celmisia semicordata*, *Hypericum bellum* ssp. *bellum* ex ACE, *Paeonia obovata* var. *alba*, *Pulsatilla alpina* ssp. *apiifolia* and *Lilium martagon*.

A very fine if somewhat sinister exhibit of *Arum pictum* was shown by Michael Myers in class 104. The inky blackness of spathe and spadix contrasted really well with the leaves and the whole plant was in tidy proportion. In class 136 was a lovely tribute to the colour purple, with Dennis Brennan's *Campanula portenschlagiana*. This is the Dalmatian Bellflower from the mountains of Croatia where it lives on moist and



*Viola hederacea*

Facing: *Arum pictum* 🍁

well-drained soils. Flowering has normally finished by late summer, so to see one going strong in autumn was very welcome. Ultimately, the sheer volume and variety of plants on the bench made this another memorable autumn show.

Angie Jones

(Photos: Peter Maguire)

*Campanula portenschlagiana*





# Discussion Weekend

14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October

The venue for the Discussion Weekend moved this year to a lovely setting in the Tweed valley near Peebles at the Macdonald Cardrona Hotel. Though the shows at these events are usually small, entries were sufficiently strong to fill the benches in a room blessed with good natural light. A wide range of foliage plants and ferns was on display and there were some highly competitive classes. Of particular note were the celmisias. Among these, Alan Furness (Wooley) showed a wonderful *Celmisia spedenii* alongside one of its exciting seedlings which has a similar habit but broader leaf shape; this probable hybrid has a very good silver colour even though the other parent is unknown. He also had two superb cushions of *CC. argentea* and *sessiliflora*. The conifer classes were also well supported, with Lionel Clarkson (Blackpool) taking the J L Mowat trophy with *Pinus leucodermis* 'Schmidtii'. The Wellstanlaw cup for the winner of class 80 for an arrangement of cut flowers, fruits and foliage went to Barry & Cathy Caudwell (Abernyte).

An interesting trio of primulas in class 5 for 3 pans from seed by David & Stella Rankin (Lasswade) included *Primula reidii*, *P. cawdoriana* and *P. capitata*. The last usually flowers at this time of the year and is unusually dark in colour, whereas the others were flowering for the second time this year. They also showed various species of the moth-pollinated, South African genus *Zaluzianskya*, including *ZZ. spathacea*, *elongata* and

*Primula cawdoriana*







*Celmisia sessiliflora*



*Celmisia argentea*

*microsiphon*. These are all new to the show bench, providing additional variety to the well-known *Z. ovata* and 'Orange Eye', though their hardiness in our area is, as yet, untested. These plants require an open gritty compost but can be pruned which encourages repeat flowering.

Unusually for an autumn show, there were disappointingly few cyclamen on display. David Millward (East Linton) was awarded the Jim Lever memorial trophy for *Cyclamen cilicium* as the best cyclamen. Christine Boulby's (Acklington) very floriferous white and silver-leaved form of *C. hederifolium* was judged the best plant in section II for the East Lothian cup, and was one of her very fine entries which also included a wonderfully geometric non-flowering rosette of *Petrocosmea cryptica* and the very dainty *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Fumiko' that had won her a trophy the previous week at Ponteland.

Almost one third of plants on show were staged by Stan da Prato (Tranent) with a huge range of plants from *Gentiana* to *Petrocosmea* and foliage plants of many hues. His efforts were massively rewarded with

*Primula reidii*



*Gentiana* 'Balmoral'

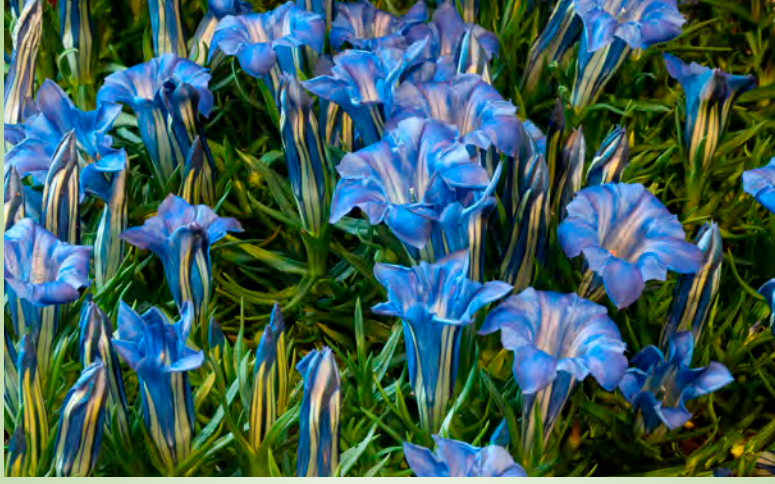


*Gentiana* 'Oban'



*Gentiana* 'Eugen's Allerbeste'

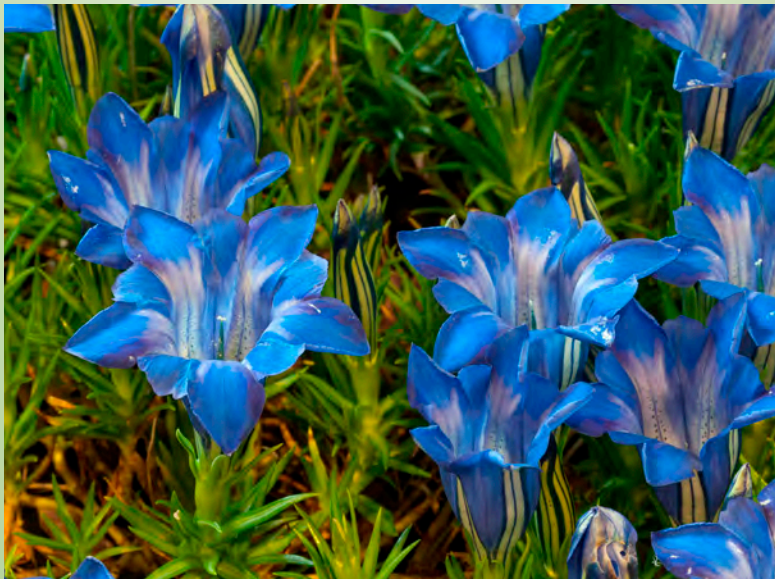




*Gentiana sino-ornata*



*Gentiana 'Strathmore'*



*Gentiana 'The Caley'*





the Mary Bowe trophy for most points in section I, the Logan Home trophy for the best miniature garden, the East Lothian trophy for class 3, for 3 pans rock plants and the Peel trophy for class 26, for 3 pans gentians. Stan's entries included many fine autumn-flowering gentians which provided the main flower-power in the show. One very interesting species that particularly took my eye was *Gentiana melandriifolia*, shown by Roma Fiddes (Kintore). This electric-blue-flowered gentian is native to SW China where it grows at high elevations in the Cangshan. It is rare in cultivation and only occasionally appears on the show bench, though I believe Roma has had this plant for some years.

The blues of the hybrid gentians on display were just stunning. Many of these are out of the stable of Ian McNaughton's breeding programme to produce multi-headed plants especially for containers. The finest of Ian's hybrids – *Gentiana* 'The Caley' – was the best plant in the show, and because it was displayed by Ian & Beryl McNaughton (Pencaitland) on their MacPlants stand it was awarded a professional medal. At the RHS Joint Rock Plant Committee meeting held later in the day this plant was given an award of merit (AM) and Beryl & Ian received a richly deserved cultural commendation. They also received an AM for their white *Gentiana* 'Oban'.

The Discussion Weekend has two photographic competitions. The Reivers trophy, for a photograph of a Scottish native plant, went to Matt Topsfield (South Uist) for a lovely picture of *Saxifraga oppositifolia* taken on The Storr, Isle of Skye. Matt also won third prize in the hotly contested holiday photographic competition with images from his trip earlier this year to study narcissi in SE Spain. Second prize went to Liam & Joan McCaughey (Ballinderry, Co Antrim) for their trip to the Dolomites and first prize went to David Livermore (Barley) for images from Lake Van in Turkey. David & Liz Livermore had further success by winning a bronze medal for most points in section II. Among their plants was *Correa* 'Dusky Bells' for which they had success the previous week in Ponteland.

David Millward  
(Photos: Peter Maguire)

Facing: *Nerine sarniensis* 'Lavant'  
Overleaf: *Gentiana* 'Troon' 



## Show Reports Highland, Nairn 30<sup>th</sup> April



One of the bonuses of visiting the Highland show in Nairn is the wonderful early morning drive across the moors from Carrbridge to Ferness and then down to Nairn itself. On each of our last three visits we have been lucky enough to have wonderful views, although this year it was a bit more exciting with there being snow on the ground in Perthshire and up at Drumochter earlier that week. We left about seven to get there by half past nine, so it really does not take that long. And after the show you can enjoy a stop at the chippie in Granttown-on-Spey or a walk around Loch Garten on your way home. We got a fish supper

*Benthamiella patagonica*





*Primula x pubescens* 'Rumbling Bridge'

which stayed hot until we reached the rather nice car park by the Ralia café where we stopped to consume it ravenously. The black-headed gulls there were very tame, no doubt used to sharing picnics and fish suppers with day-trippers like us. The other great bonus is that you get to see wonderful plants grown by members of the Highland group who do not often venture further south. Section II was better filled than in many of the other shows we have attended this year and the plants there were of a particularly high standard.

*Rhododendron racemosum*

Facing: *Anemone pavonina* 🍁

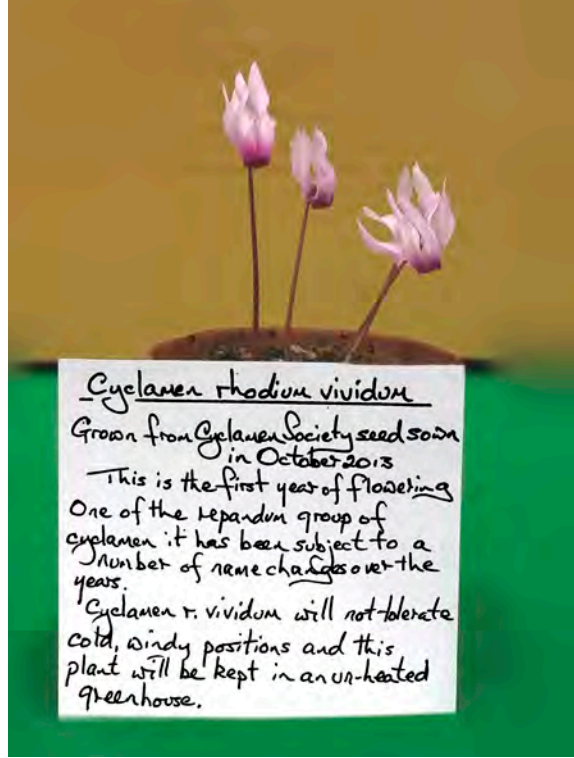








*Tulipa ferganica*



Cyclamen rhodium vividum

Grown from Cyclamen Society seed sown  
in October 2013

This is the first year of flowering  
One of the repandum group of  
cyclamen it has been subject to a  
number of name changes over the  
years.

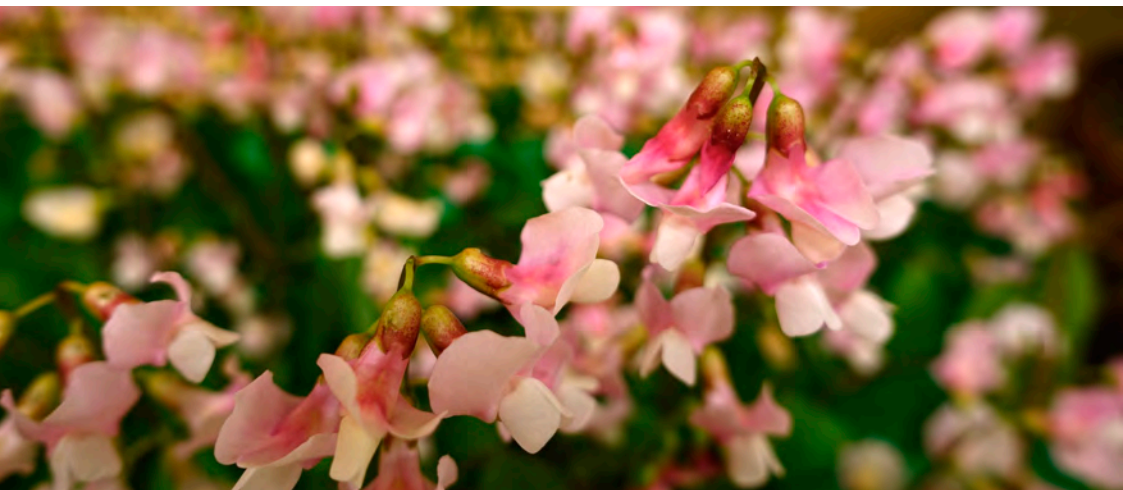
Cyclamen r. vividum will not tolerate  
cold, windy positions and this  
plant will be kept in an un-heated  
greenhouse.

Self-explanatory!

## Section I

A fantastic pan of *Benthamiella patagonica* was given the Forrest medal; its proud owners and expert cultivators were Francis & Margaret Higgins (Berriedale). Francis & Margaret were therefore also the winners of the Weir shield for the best plant exhibited by a member resident in Highland or Moray. The *Benthamiella* is a very neat tight cushion plant with yellow, white or cream flowers. It used to be regarded as more than one species. This one was described as the white form, said to grow in the wild

*Lathyrus vernus* 'Albroseus'





One of about ten species of *Titanopsis* (Family Aizoaceae), South Africa on rocky slopes and mountains from 600 m to 1000 m in southern Santa Cruz, Patagonia. Francis & Margaret also had a wonderfully large plant of a *Pleione* (also seen at the Perth Show).

The Askival trophy was won by none other than Stan da Prato for his pan of *Tulipa linifolia*. This very bright red species is eye-catching and redder than some of the commonly seen cultivars. It is an easy tulip to grow if given good well-drained conditions and enough light to keep the growth compact. Stan grows it outside for maximum light, resulting in a good sturdy plant.

Stan must have had a pantechinon to bring his multitude of plants from south of Edinburgh, helping to fill the northern benches. He was also awarded the Highland trophy for most first prize points in Section 1. Stan brought lots of good plants; we particularly liked the luxuriant looking *Oxalis oregana* from the Pacific Northwest of America. This form has large (more than 2 cm) bright pink flowers, bright green leaves, and looks like a larger version of our own native Wood Sorrel. It is also called Redwood Sorrel in the USA, where the usual form has white flowers or sometimes they are lightly veined with pink. It carpets the forest floor in Redwood and Douglas Fir forests from California and Washington State over to the east

*Helichrysum arwae*, a high altitude plant from the Yemen





*Iris albomarginata* hybrid

side of the Cascades. It could also be grown outside and we have recently seen it growing well in a sheltered position in some Deeside gardens. Stan also won the Grouse salver for the best ericaceous plant in show with his *Rhododendron racemosum*.

The Culloden cup is awarded for the best primula in the show. This year it went to *Primula x pubescens* 'Rumbling Bridge', a hybrid from Graeme & Hilary Butler, that has soft yellow-cream flowers, coming from the stable of their Rumbling Bridge Nursery.

## Section II

Colinne Souter won the George Rosslyn Shiras tankard for the most first prize points in section II. Tina Finch (Aldearn) was awarded the Dunbarney salver for the best plant in section II - a well-grown pan of the native *Primula scotica* - while Sue Mackintosh had the best plant from a first-time exhibitor - a rather nice white *Lewisia cotyledon* hybrid. It is great to see so many local members and such encouragement for new exhibitors.

*Erigeron* 'Canary Bird'





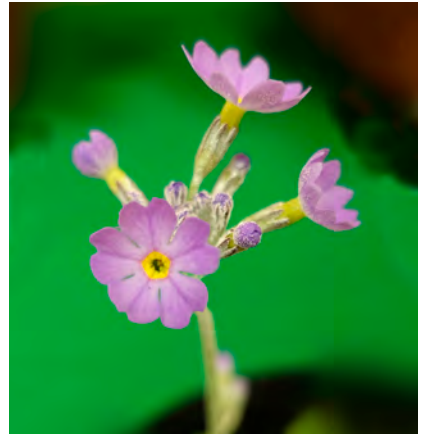
*Pleione 'Tongariro'* (?)

The award of three certificates of merit demonstrates the quality of the exhibits in Section II. Two went to Tina Finch, for her *Primula scotica* and rather nice *Ranunculus amplexicaulis*. The other was to Francis & Margaret Higgins for that notoriously tricky plant *Erigeron aureus* 'Canary Bird'.

*Cathy (and Barry) Caudwell*

Nurserymen love happy customers

*Primula farinosa*



# Aberdeen, 14<sup>th</sup> May

The Aberdeen show, revived last year, has settled happily into its new home. The Victorian Corridor in Duthie Park Winter Gardens again provided an attractive and well-lit setting for the exhibits. Being open to the public, this is an excellent chance to promote alpines to folk who may never have thought of this aspect of gardening, which is lately receiving more interest in the gardening media.

This year there were 219 entries from 29 exhibitors – representing a substantial increase over last year, when there were 176 entries from 22 exhibitors. We hope that a similar increase in interest can be maintained in future years. The standard of exhibits was high. Familiar names were much in evidence, but there were new and junior entries as well – a trend we hope to encourage.

Plant sales were very successful, and we thank the specialist nurseries who took space. There was a truly mouth-watering selection of plants available, with again the opportunity to interest the public as well as specialists.

Of the many outstanding exhibits on display, special mention should be made of the *Saxifraga pubescens* 'Snowcap' that earned the Forrest medal for Cyril Lafong. Ian Christie won the Craig cup for the best primula, while the Simpson salver for the best dwarf rhododendron went to Stan da Prato, who also won the Walker of Portlethen trophy. Certificates of merit went to Cyril Lafong, Bob Maxwell and Bill MacGregor. Penny Irvine, one of our new young entrants, received the Elizabeth bowl for her pans of saxifrage and sempervivum (best junior exhibit).

Sheila McNulty had first prize in Class 96





Mike Hopkins with hope for the future of the SRGC!



*Saxifraga pubescens* 'Snowcap' was added to Cyril Lafong's Forrest medals

Among other outstanding entries, *Lewisia* were much in evidence, being shown by (among others) Mike Hopkins and Bill MacGregor. Mention should also be made of Bob Maxwell's *Fritillaria camschatcensis*.

The troughs exhibited in class 96 included a number from junior members, who were at a disadvantage in competing with 'old hands'; we hope that next year we shall be able to have more classes for the younger folk.

We emphasise that the Winter Gardens are open to the general public, and we hope that visiting the show will encourage more new growers. Alpine gardening has featured recently in magazines and on the TV – much to be welcomed. We thank the Winter Gardens staff for their willing and supportive help and look forward to holding the show there for many years to come.

Lesley Glasser  
(Photos:  
Ian Chapman)



*Rhododendron*  
'Dora Amateis'  
won best  
*Rhododendron* for  
Stan da Prato

# Stirling 12<sup>th</sup> March



Before the general public gets in to see a show, a lot of work has to be done. Most of this is carried out behind the scenes at home by the show secretary who must record the entries and make out entry cards. Then he (or she) has to gather together all the bits and pieces, odds and ends, drive to the show and set out tables and covers. Each class must be allocated the correct amount of space in the show. An early show like Kincardine is very dependent on weather for the entries in the various classes. So there will be some un-entered classes and empty spaces on the bench. These may be adjusted nearer to judging time. The secretary also has to make sure that the right exhibitors get the right cards. There are always last minute changes to entries, which is good for the exhibitor but makes more work for the show secretary. In the old days some shows held fast to the rule that entries must be submitted a couple of days before the show. James Aitken, who many years ago was show secretary in Edinburgh when the early show - now in Kincardine - was held in Edinburgh, was the first to allow late entries up to one hour before judging. Now, all shows are just as flexible. This may seem the natural thing to do but if you read the schedules for other shows you will find that entries should be in by the Tuesday or Wednesday before a Saturday show. Think of all the work that the show secretary copes with and you will realise why yours never has time to chat before judging has finished. It also explains why, after judging, the show secretary is exhausted. Until then he or she must have a solution to any problem which might come along.

## Who Judges What?

The show secretary also has to choose and invite the judges. No person may judge at the same show for more than two out of three years. Between them the judges have a wide experience of different types of plant. Each class is judged by three judges. If one of them has an entry in the class,

6-Pan displays (Sue Simpson and Cyril Lafong)





another judge is substituted. Two of the three must agree on the prize winners. This leads to much discussion but in the end it all works out well. After the decisions are made, the stewards record the results and tot them up to see who has won most points and qualified for awards and so forth. After all classes are judged the time comes to judge *Best in Show* and award special prizes and trophies. The plant that is judged *Best in Show* is awarded a George Forrest memorial medal. So if you have never entered one of your plants at an SRGC show, now you know what happens and you may be assured that your entry will be treated fairly. If you initially plan to bring one plant, it is better to increase your chances of success and bring several. They will support each other in the car!

## The Results

The Forrest medal and The Institute of Quarrying quaiach were taken once again by Cyril Lafong's *Trillium rivale* 'Purple Heart', thus adding a 53<sup>rd</sup> Forrest to his collection! Stan da Prato took the Carnegie Dunfermline trust trophy for most points in section 1. This is a tribute to his terrific support for this and all the other SRGC shows. I would like to point out his pale blue *Scilla mischtschenkoana*, which is a fine bulb for early spring flowering. I have only grown it under cold glass, where it increases well. Sam Sutherland took the Spiller trophy for best *Primula* with his fine dome of *P. allionii* 'Mary Berry'. Anne Chambers had a *Primula nana* that was awarded a certificate of merit. Sue Simpson's *Pulsatilla vernalis* was the best European plant in the show and winner of the Ben Ledi quaiach. The Glassford Sprunt trophy for best pan of bulbs was won by Cyril Lafong's fabulous *Fritillaria gibbosa*.

Cushion saxifrages seem to be making a comeback at the shows, which must be good news for our sister club, The Saxifrage Society. In the first two classes there were six kabschia saxifrages. New to me were 'Emil Holub' (apricot), 'Jan Neruda' (palest pink), 'Karel Kapek' (pink with a dark centre) and 'Gemma' (smaller but with similar colouring to 'Karel Kapek'). Cyril showed the highly desirable white-flowered *Saxifraga scardica* ssp. *korabensis*, while Barry & Cathy Caudwell proved that the oldies are hard to beat, with their pale yellow *S. x boydii* 'Sulphurea'. These were all shown as small plants. In the class for bigger pans of saxifrage, Sue Simpson won with deep pink 'Your Smile', pale lilac 'River Thame' and purple to pink 'Dawn Frost'. Stan da Prato introduced a different colour with his white 'Mary Golds'. Ian Christie took a different route with two different types: *S. grisebachii* and *S. porophylla*. These are good show plants because their flowers' stems slowly lengthen over about six weeks and they stay in good condition for several shows.

*Corydalis* have been a bright colourful feature at this show for many years and this year the star was Tom Green's bright red, compactly grown *Corydalis solida*. The bright red of the open flowers blends back to purple in the unopened buds, making a nice combination.

I like snowdrops. I grow several and show them at February's Early Bulb Display in Dunblane. Often the snowdrops are finished by the time of Kincardine but the cold wet spring of 2016 meant that many were later into bloom this year. This allowed us to marvel at one of the biggest snowdrops I have seen, Cyril's pan of *Galanthus plicatus* 'E A Bowles'. It dwarfed Ian Christie's G. 'Eyeshadow', which is a big flower by usual standards. Ian paired his snowdrop with a snowflake, *Leucojum vernum*.

*Sisyrinchium douglasii* is most often found in Scottish rock gardens as a white flower. Stan showed the white form in his 3 pans from the open class. In the wild, white flowers are very rare; the predominant colour is magenta. Why? I suspect it is because Jack Drake's Inshriach Nursery near Aviemore sold the white form. In the early days of the SRGC and AGS, Jack had travelled widely in western North America with Will Ingwersen and they collected the rare form and propagated it.

There were good entries of narcissus and tulip this year. Several good pans of *Fritillaria* produced a lot of interest, especially David Millward's *F. aurea* and Jean Wyllie's two Chinese species, *F. walujewii* and *F. yuminensis*. Three different colour forms of *Fritillaria imperialis* dominated the gold medal display of bulbs staged by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. *Iris* species were well represented with a fine pan of pale yellow *I. winogradowii* from Ian Christie and blue *Iris* 'Sindpers' (cross of *I. sindjarensis* (now a synonym of *I. aucheri*) x *I. persica*) from Peter Semple.

At this time of year, members of the Ranunculaceae are invaluable. Fabulous pulsatillas from Sue Simpson vied for the Forrest medal while bright hepaticas scattered the benches with their small bright flowers. There is an increasing interest in hepaticas, prompted by wonderful new plants introduced by our nurseries. Even small young plants are very interesting, perhaps more so than big specimens where the beauty of individual flowers is swamped by the overall show. I expect most members grow one or a few. I remember that many years ago even seed was hard to come by and they were real connoisseur's plants. However, once you are hooked on them the risk is that you will buy more and more. In early spring even special forms of the common Celandine are a welcome sight.

So thank you to everyone who staged plants, to Sam and his judges Peggy Anderson, Alan Gardner, Ian Christie, Glassford Sprunt, Jean Wyllie and Peter Semple. If you have yet to visit the Kincardine show either as an exhibitor or not, it is easy to find - right in the middle of Scotland, equidistant from Edinburgh and Glasgow. You can be assured of a warm welcome and good food supplied by the local coffee house.

Sandy Leven

# Scottish Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee Awards

21 Feb 2015 Dunblane

Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Galanthus* 'Ailwyn' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by David & Margaret MacLennan ▣ *Iris* 'Blue Note' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand International ▣ *Iris* 'Vivacious Beginnings', as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand International.

21 March 2015 – Kincardine

Award of Merit

▣ *Narcissus* x *munozii-garmendiae* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by The Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Saxifraga pulchra* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Cyril Lafong ▣ *Asarum splendens* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Watt Russell ▣ *Dionysia* 'Elegance' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Bill Robinson.

18 April 2015 – Perth

Award of Merit

▣ *Andromeda polifolia* 'Nikko' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Stan Da Prato ▣ *Primula petiolaris* 'Redpoll' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jane & Alan Thomson.

Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Primula bullata* var *bracteata* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Cyril Lafong ▣ *Trillium albidum* x *T. chloropetalum* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Ian Christie.

2 May 2015 – Glasgow

Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Primula coelata* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Stella and David Rankin ▣ *Daphne arbuscula* var. *alba* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Cyril Lafong ▣ *Junellia coralloides* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Brian & Shelagh Smethurst.

Certificate of Cultural Commendation

▣ The Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, for a pan of *Primula sherriffiae* ▣ Sam Sutherland, for a pan of *Primula rusbyi*.

## 30 May 2015 – Gardening Scotland

### Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Cornus suecica* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Hartside Nursery Garden ▣ *Fritillaria cirrhosa* 'Tsari Form' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Anne Chambers.

### Recommendation for AGM Assessment

▣ *Epipactis gigantea* 'Serpentine Night' was recommended for further assessment as a candidate for an Award of Garden Merit, exhibited by Jacques Amand International.



## 20 February 2016 – Dunblane Award of Merit

▣ *Iris* 'Spot On' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand International.

### Certificate of Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Crocus tauricus* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Carole & Ian Bainbridge ▣ *Iris* 'Katherine Gold' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand ▣ *Iris* 'Scent Sational' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand ▣ *Iris* 'Sunshine' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand ▣ *Iris reticulata* 'Adiyaman' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand ▣ *Iris* 'Blue Hill' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand.

## 9 April 2016 – Edinburgh First Class Certificate

▣ *Pleione x confusa* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Cyril Lafong ▣ *Pleione* 'Britannia gx. Doreen' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jane & Alan Thomson.





### Award of Merit

▣ *Primula 'Aire Waves'* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Mala Janes.

### Preliminary Commendation

▣ *Saxifraga dinnikii 'Floralpin'* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Cyril

Lafong ▣ *Vaccinium retusum*

as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Alan Furness ▣ *Primula odontocalyx* var. *alba* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Margaret & Henry Taylor.



### Certificate of Cultural Commendation

▣ Alan & Jane Thomson, for a pan of *Pleione 'Britannia* gx. *Doreen'*.



### Botanical Certificate

▣ *Iris bucharica* FEKET 87 form, exhibited by The Regius Keeper, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

### Recommendation for AGM Assessment

▣ *Primula marginata 'Napoleon'* was recommended for further assessment as a candidate for an Award of Garden Merit, exhibited by Mala Janes.



### 7 May 2016 – Glasgow First Class Certificate

▣ *Androsace cylindrica x hirtella* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Sam Sutherland.

## Award of Merit

▣ *Ranunculus parnassifolius* 'Picos' x 'Nuria' pink form, as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Sam Sutherland ▣ *Lamium sandrasicum* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Susan Simpson ▣ *Pulsatilla patens* ssp. *nuttalliana*, as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Lionel Clarkson.



## Preliminary Certificate

▣ *Brimeura fastigiata*, as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Carole & Ian Bainbridge.



## Botanical Certificate

▣ *Meconopsis pseudointegriifolia* new form, as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Stella & David Rankin.



## Certificate of Cultural Commendation

▣ Sam Sutherland, for a pan of *Androsace cylindrica* x *hirtella* ▣ Sam Sutherland, for a pan of *Ranunculus parnassifolius* 'Picos' x 'Nuria' Pink form ▣ Lionel Clarkson, for a pan of *Pulsatilla patens* ssp. *nuttalliana*.



## 4 June – Gardening Scotland, 2016

### Preliminary Certificate

▣ *Lewisia* 'Brynhyfyd Hybrids' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Stella & David Rankin

▣ *Primula bullata* var. *forrestii* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Stella & David Rankin

▣ *Amitostigma* 'Shihou' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand International

▣ *Maianthemum oleraceum* as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Jacques Amand International.

### Recommendation for AGM Assessment

▣ *Rheum alexandrae* was recommended for further assessment as a candidate for an Award of Garden Merit, exhibited by SRGC.

## 15 October – Peebles

(Awards subject to ratification)

### Preliminary Certificate

▣ *Saxifraga fortunei* 'Fumikos' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Christine Boulby.

### Award of Merit

▣ *Gentiana* x 'Oban' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Ian & Beryl McNaughton

▣ *Gentiana* x 'The Caley' as a hardy flowering plant for exhibition, exhibited by Ian & Beryl McNaughton.



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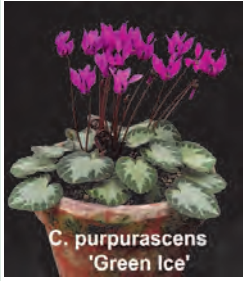
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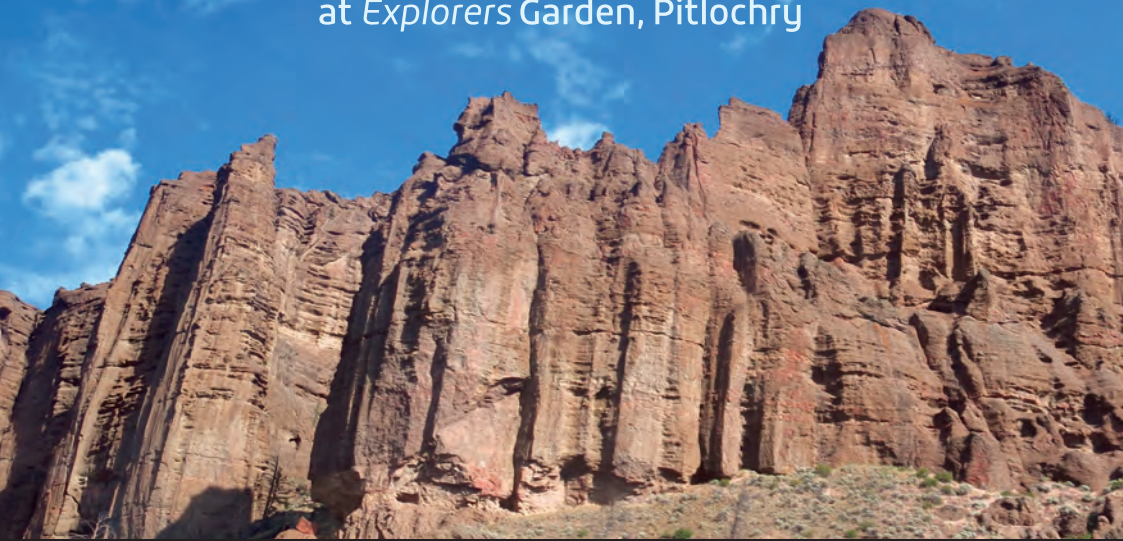
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