

International Rock Gardener



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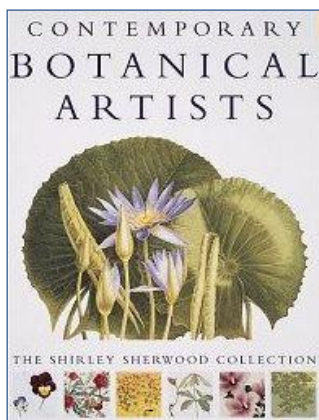
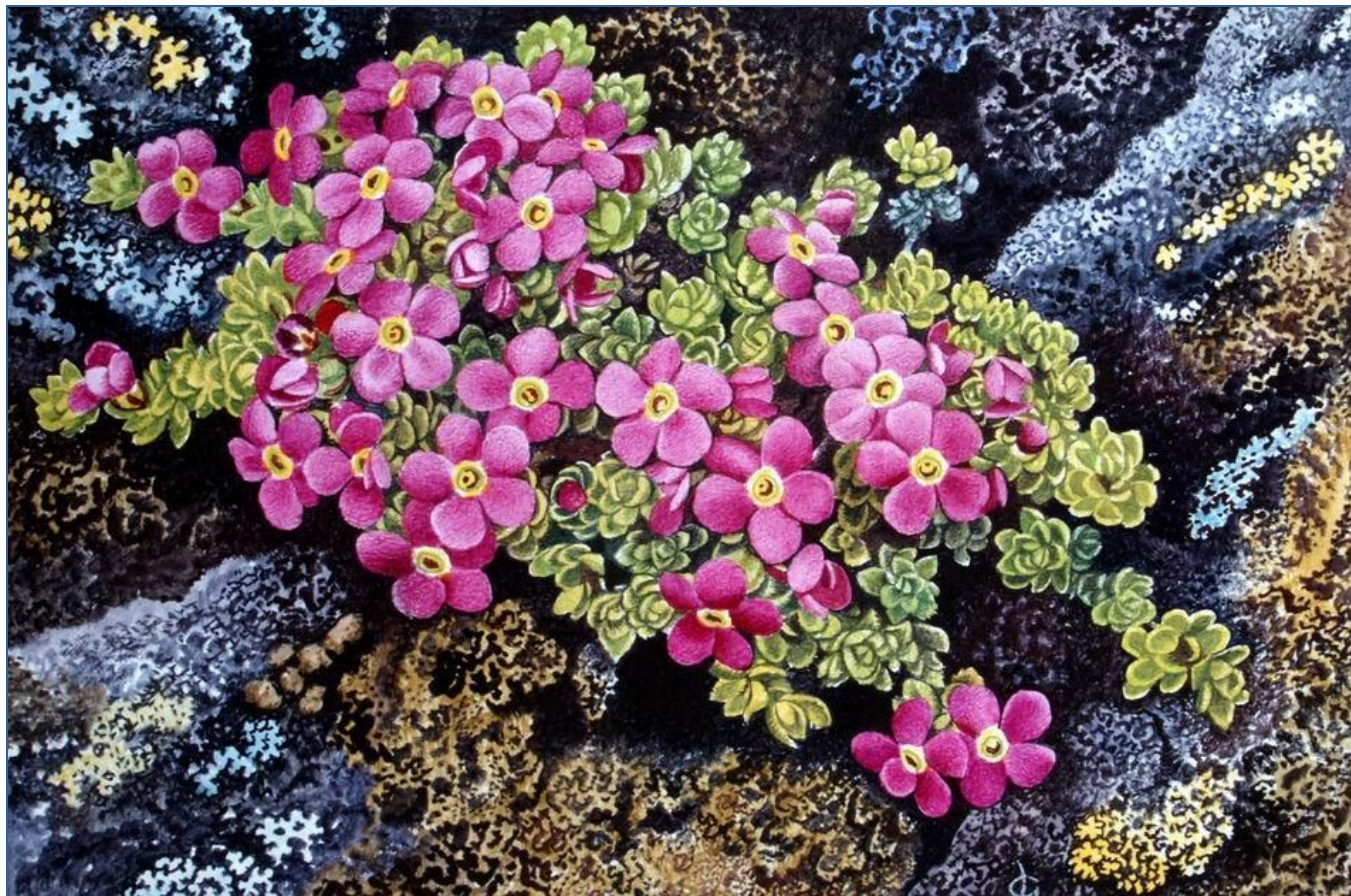
March 2013



The plant world is full of many stories and interlinking paths: over the years both plants and people come together, drift apart and meet again. It is often said that very little is truly new under the sun, though happily discoveries are still made by intrepid and determined plant hunters, but for many, there is just as much interest in uncovering the connections between the hunters and plants of the past - be that distant or in living memory. Yes, there are those happy to just see a plant or seed for sale and to obtain it to grow in their garden, never giving its origins a second thought – but there is so often a “back story” to a plant that adds so much intrigue to the process – we are happy to celebrate such tales in these pages.

---Art from the mountains---

A little piece of history: *Androsace euryantha* painted in 1991 by Lawrence Greenwood from a photo taken in the wild by Pete Boardman. This slide of the painting was kindly supplied by Mrs Lillian Greenwood.

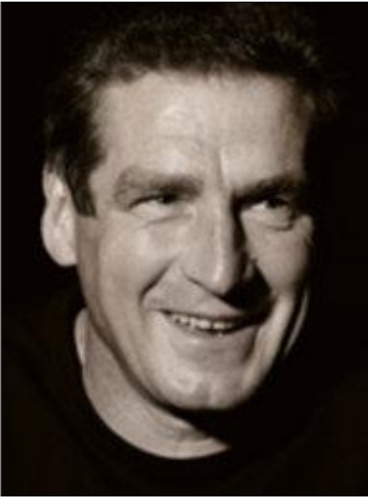


Lawrence Greenwood (1915-98) was a remarkable painter who exhibited numerous plant paintings at SRGC shows over many years. An RHS Gold Medallist, his work is represented in such collections as that of [Dr. Shirley Sherwood](#), famous for the [gallery bearing her name at Kew](#). He also had work included in Dr Sherwood's book "Contemporary Botanical Artists" 1996.

In the SRGC journal, "The Rock Garden" of July 2007, another RHS Gold Medallist and great friend of the Greenwoods, [the plantswoman](#) and botanical painter Anne Chambers, wrote about botanical art work, referencing that of Lawrence Greenwood, in '[An Artist's Impression](#)'.

Lawrence, like Anne, much preferred to paint "from life" but he made some very exciting paintings from the slides of the fabulous plants seen in the wild by such plant hunters as Pete Boardman, Brian Halliwell, Ron McBeath and George Smith.

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Plantsman, photographer and traveller Jozef Lemmens was the founding President of the Flemish Rock Garden Club, the [VRV \(Vlaamse Rotsplanten Vereniging\)](#) in 2003. He lives in Wilsele, a suburb of Leuven, a small University city north of Brussels in the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. He says that his two most important hobbies are rock garden plants and photography and he brings these together most successfully. You can enjoy both his interest in [plants](#) and [photography](#) - which extends beyond plants - in his websites. He has a particular fondness for the genus [Androsace](#) which he also promotes on the internet. Jozef's photo of *Androsace euryantha* is on the cover of this IRG.

---Gardens in the Mountains---

Androsace euryantha by Jozef Lemmens

Ever since the publication of the book *The Genus Androsace* in 1997, I have been fascinated by the plant on its cover. This shows a painting of a beautiful, deep pink *Androsace euryantha*. The painting was created by Lawrence Greenwood based on a photo taken by Pete Boardman.



Androsace euryantha original photo on Minya Konka – China © Pete Boardman 1991

This is the original photo of the plant, kindly loaned by Pete Boardman – the faithful depiction of Lawrence Greenwood in his painting for the book cover is obvious. The original watercolour painting was formerly owned

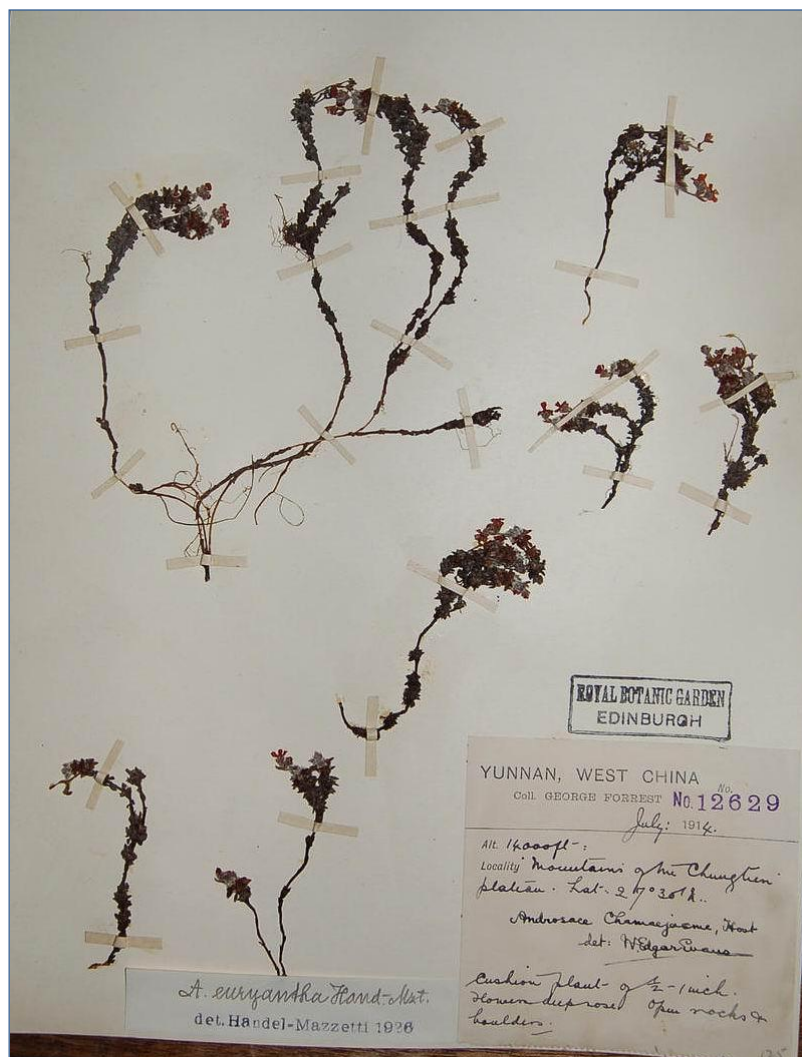
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by the late George Smith who was an expert in high alpiners. He had a special interest in rhododendrons, primulas, saxifrages and, of course, androsaces. He made a number of trips to the Himalayas and western China. With Duncan Lowe, he wrote 'The Genus Androsace – A Monograph for Gardeners and Botanists' ... Ed.

George Forrest discovered this androsace in the mountains of the Chungtien plateau in July of 1914. The plant was initially identified as an *Androsace chamaejasme*.



Androsace chamaejasme pictured, left, by Mark Griffiths and right, by Krzysztof Ciesielski.



[RBGE](#) Herbarium sheet for George Forrest's collection 12629: *Androsace euryantha* collected July 1914 Chungtien Plateau at 14000ft/ 4200m - Cushion plant to 2.5cm deep rose flowers, growing on open rocks and boulders.

Handel-Mazzetti found *Androsace euryantha* during his trek across the Waha Mountains on July 20, 1915, and he made a botanical description in the year 1924. [This link](#) will show you the herbarium sheet of Handel-mazzetti at the Virtual Herbarium of the Institute of Botany at the University of Vienna. Presumably since that time, no one had found this plant again. That is, until Pete Boardman and George Smith saw a mysterious plant while trekking in the Minya Konka region in 1991, at which point they had no idea what species it might be. Pete and Pam Boardman were able to find plants of this species for a second time during their hiking trip to the Waha Mountains during the summer of 2006, but the plants were already past flowering.

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Habitat of *Primula bulleyana*

It is only logical that I would like to see this beautiful androsace with my own eyes. A first attempt was made in June 2006. Together with Rosi and Dieter Zschummel, we set out for the Waha Mountains.



Left: Lake Lugu - photo © George Lu

The quest had its start in Muditschi, a village near Lugu Lake, near to the border of Yunnan and Sichuan. The first day was spent in a beautiful valley, where there were thousands of flowering *Primula bulleyana* ssp. *beesiana* as well as *P. pulchella* and *P. poissonii* and many Cypripediums, including *C. yunnanense*, *flavum* and *guttatum*. Further on, there were species like *Hemipilia cruciata*, *Arisaema bathycoleum*, *Pleione bulbocodioides*, *Roscoea tibetica*, *Adonis davidii* and *Paeonia delavayi*.

On the second day, we were supposed to try to reach the summit of the mountain; however, just after an hour, we had to abort our attempt because the horses carrying our luggage up the mountain failed to get any further due to the slippery mountain trails, a condition caused by the plentiful rain from the days before.

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Rosi and Dieter made a second attempt in the autumn of 2010. Due to both better preparation and better information, Dieter and a guide succeeded making it to the top of the Waha Mountains, and plants could be found. Of course, the plants found were not in bloom. A bit of seed was collected and distributed among a few plant lovers. From the initial results, however, it seems the plant is very difficult to cultivate.



Primula bulleyana subsp.
beesiana

Now that I knew where the androsace could be found, I wanted to return to the site to find some specimens in flower. Together with Rosi and Dieter, Raymond and [Herman Laporte](#) a new excursion was planned, a trip of which was made in June 2012.

The necessary preparations were made in Loshui, a village located beside Lugu Lake. Since my last visit, the village had changed completely and became touristy, with hundreds of visitors swarming

the place daily. We obtained our information from the older local people.



Local beauty with a primula posy



Paeonia delavayi

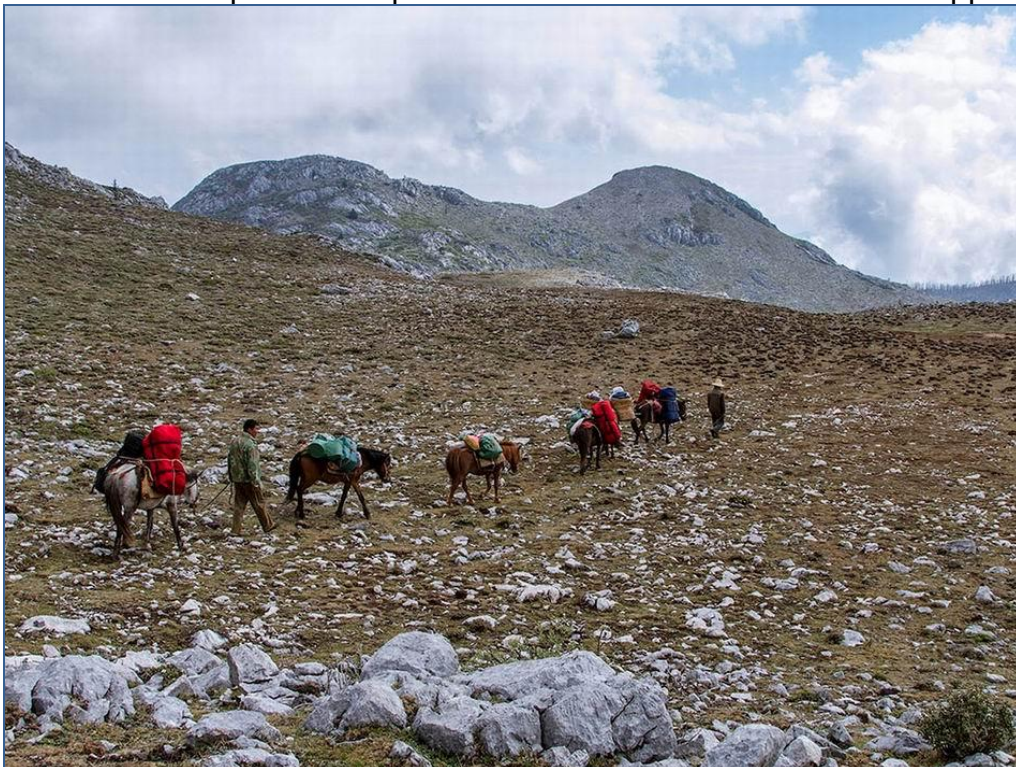
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Setting out from Lugu Lake, we drove to a small peasant village (Ala'ao), where we were able to find horses and escorts. Under the supervision of the villagers, six horses were loaded up with the necessary food, supplies, and camping gear. This village sits at an elevation of around 2700m. Along with 2 horsemen, a cook, and a guide, the trip was done in a span of 4 days.



Camping place

Once outside the village, our trip gradually began to climb, especially across a forested area. The plants there included *Androsace dissecta*, *Paris polyphylla* and annual Gentians. Due to the arid spring, there was little in bloom. Our first camp was set up in an old settlement at an altitude of approx. 3650m.



The expedition

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The second day was initially still wooded with *Daphne aff. depauperata* as a most special plant. Not exactly the most beautiful of plant species, but it is always nice to find something that is presumably not yet in cultivation. Other plants included the *Maianthemum cf. tatsienense*, ***Rhododendron wardii*** and *Paeonia delavayi* subsp. *delavayi*.



Above: *Rhododendron wardii*

Left and below: *Rhododendron yunghingense*



Slowly, we emerged above the tree line, and the landscape was mainly characterized by low rhododendron shrub of ***Rhododendron yunghingense***. Between them grew *Acanthocalyx delavayi*,

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Oxygraphis glacialis, *Pedicularis* cf. *confertiflora*, *Corydalis pachycentra*, ***Meconopsis pseudointegrifolia***, *Omphalogramma vinciflorum*, *Primula szechuanica* and ***Mandragora caulescens***, among others.



Oxygraphis glacialis



Meconopsis pseudointegrifolia



Mandragora caulescens – all photos by Jozef Lemmens, except where stated.

We would eventually end up in rough open terrain at an altitude of 4200m, with view on the top of the ridge. Apparently, it was a good spot for caterpillar fungus (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*). There were dozens of people around looking for this. This fungus has all sorts of medical applications associated with it. It is supposed to be good for the kidneys and lungs, and it is used to combat all sorts of ailments such as hepatitis, tumours, respiratory problems and impotence.

In order to spend the night in a safer place, it was decided to set up camp a bit down the road near a water pond. When setting up the tents, we searched the area for plants, all the while attracting dubious stares from the fungus collectors who presumably thought that we strangers were not entirely normal.

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Below left: [A Tibetan collector](#) of caterpillar fungus - it is locally important [as a "crop"](#). (© Guardian News 2010)



Above *Ophiocordyceps sinensis* - photo from [internet](#)

When the first plants were found, my initial thought was that this was merely a smaller version *Androsace wardii*. Upon re-reading one of the documents that Handel-Mazzetti had drawn up, I noticed that he too had made this same comparison. The difference lies in how it grows; the leaf shape and their dimensions, and the length of the flower stalk. Unfortunately, we got there a little too early, so only a few plants were in bloom. Another disappointment was that these flowering plants were pale pink in colour and were not as beautifully deep pink as depicted on the cover of the *Androsace* book.



Androsace euryantha foliage with faded flowers - photo Pete Boardman 2006

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The area consisted of chalky, stone rich slopes. The plants grew in the ground between these rocks. The accompanying plants were *Androsace alchemilloides*, *Paraquilegia microphylla*, ***Spongiocarpella nubigena***, *Draba* cf. *yunnanensis*, *Anemone* sp., *Saxifraga rupicola*, *Androsace spinulifera* and *Sibbaldia purpurea*, among others.



Above:
Spongiocarpella nubigena

Left: *Androsace euryantha*, detail
(cover photo)

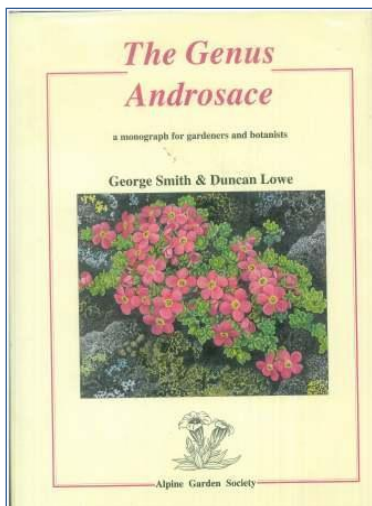
Far left: *Sibbaldia purpurea*

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The androsace plants form loose to relatively compact mats from a few cm wide to about 40cm in width, which are built from open rosettes. The leaves were about 5 to 7mm long and especially pubescent on the underside, and they had pretty long hairs along the leaf edge. The 5 to 15mm long, maroon flower stems usually bore 2 or 3 flowers, with a few that had 1 or 4 flowers. The flower colour was between pale and medium pink. The calyces were maroonish with a green tint. The altitude where the plants were located was between 4200m and 4300m above sea level.



Androsace euryantha, showing paler blossoms than those shown by Pete Boardman in 1991.



I would like to thank Alan Elliott for his help with G. Forrest's herbarium material, Pete Boardman for his assistance and information, and Rosi and Dieter in particular for organizing the trip and the opportunity to experience this journey together.

J.L.

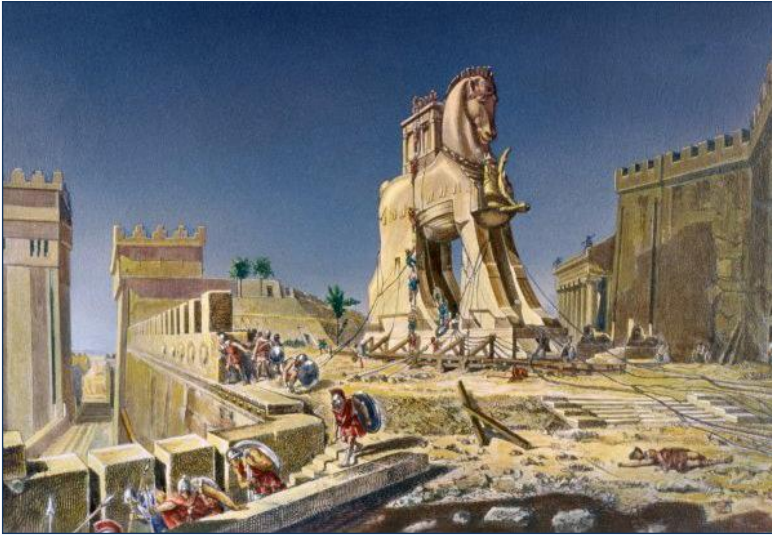
Left: The cover of the book with the painting by Lawrence Greenwood, which fired Jozef's imagination.

'The Genus Androsace' by George Smith and Duncan Lowe. (both now sadly deceased) This version of book was published [by the AGS](#) in 1997. (It was first published in 1977.)
ISBN: 0900048670

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---Plant Portrait---

A Dwarf Storksbill 'from Scotland' by Zdeněk Zvolanek



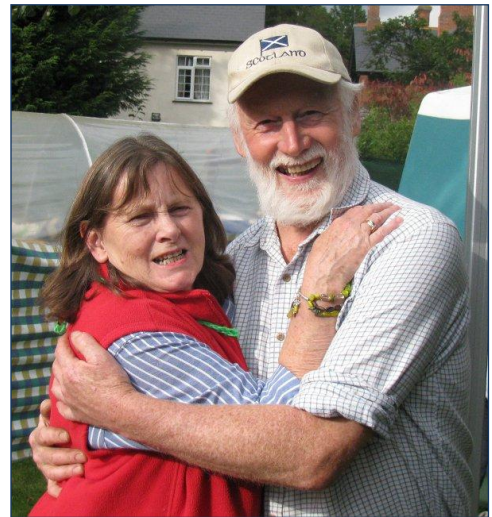
Above : "...even bearing gifts" painting [by Henri Motte](#)

Right: Susan and Ron McBeath, having fun as usual! photo [Rob Potterton](#)

Ron visited Prague as a busy nurseryman, 15 years ago, and gave me this perennial cranesbill as a "forma album". Well, flowers own only small decently coquettish markings on the upper petals with shy rose pink veins, the rest is white.

Usually flower gifts from Scotland are, for me, like Greek gifts; they do not fit into my dry and hot garden.

There is one exception – *Erodium cheilanthifolium*, which came to me in the suitcase of that rusty Scottish Viking's descendant, the famous Ron McBeath. These days Ron is more frosted than rusty. 🧊



the

43. *ERODIUM CHEILANTHIFOLIUM*. N. — Acaule caespitosum, radice crassâ lignosâ rubrâ, foliis omnibus radicalibus utrinque griseo-canis hirsutis ambitu ovato-oblongis bipinnatisectis segmentis inferioribus longioribus, rachî inter segmenta dentatâ, lobulis iterum divisis rotundato-obtusis, scapis 3-4-floris patulo-hirtis folia duplò superantibus, bracteis ovato-acutis hirtis scariosis, pedicellis post anthesin bis refractis fructu brevioribus, sepalis dorso hirtis subglandulosis ovatis mucronatis 5 striis viridibus notatis, angustè albomarginatis, petalis calyce duplò longioribus subemarginatis albis, 3-5-rubro-striatis, duobus superioribus maculâ nigricante donatis, carpellis hirtis, aristis basi intus barbatis. — Ab *Er. supracano* *l'Her.* indumento, foliisque bipinnatisectis, laciniis confertioribus, ab *Er. petraeo* foliis multò tenuius dissectis laciniisque triplò brevioribus obtusissimis distinctum. In *E. petraeo* insuper segmenta inferiora aliis longiora sunt, eo modo ut folium ferè trisectum videatur, pili longi subsericei et flores immaculati. — Ab *E. glanduloso* *Willd.* quod petala maculata habet, laciniis foliorum multò brevioribus, pubescentiâ non glandulosâ, calyce minùs cristato, petalis rotundato-emarginatis neque acutis etiam differt.

Elegans species habitat in summis siccis *Sierra Tejada* et *Sierra Nevada* alt. 5000' — 8000'.

Left: Description page from 'Elenchus plantarum novarum minusque cognitarum quas in itinere hispanico legit Edmundus Boissier' : part of the magnificent accessible resource of the [Missouri Botanical Garden](#) via Archive.org.

Sierra Tejada is so named for the yew trees ("tejo" means yew) once found there in abundance.

[Pierre Edmond Boissier](#) 1810-1885, (a [Gran botanico](#) in the Spanish language, though he was Swiss) [described this species in 1837](#) . *Erodium petraeum* (Gouan) Willd. subsp. *crispum* (Lapeyr.) Rouy is sometimes given as a synonym.

This species is distributed in southern Spain (Andalucia) and Morocco in Northern Africa. Some literature tells that it grows at elevations of 1500 – 2400m and flowers in June and July. It seems to me that this dwarf storksbill is a saxatile plant, loving local crevices.

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My plant, now 15 years old, forms a ground hugging tuft with thick woody branches at the base, covered with deeply divided green leaves. Flowers are in umbels of 2-4, 12mm in diameter and the plant in flower is only 10cm high. The indumentum is pubescent-glandulous and the lignified stems present real problems for propagation. Seeds are rarely formed - I have found only one seedling near the mother plant.



Above and right:

*Erodium
cheilanthifolium
album*
in 'the Beauty Slope',
the garden of Zdeněk
Zvolanek



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Erodium cheilanthifolium photo [Zdeněk Řeháček](#)



As I never water my limestone crevice garden, my erodium is in fine hard condition in autumn and bone hardy during our mood changing winters. It is bad luck that I did not see this valuable mountain plant during my trip to Spain. Here I only had the chance to see its cousin on the 3000m acid alpine ridge of Sierra Nevada. This related alpine storksbill, has extremely small and dense hairy foliage and nice small flowers with dark black Spanish eyes on very short stems. According to that true English gentleman [Dr. John Richards](#), this species is *Erodium rupicola*. This stone-loving species is probably better designed for the Highlands of Scotland and not for my soil with lime.

Z.Z.

Ed.: Erodiums and geranium get the name "storksbill", "heronsbill," or "cranesbill" for the shape of their seedheads.

Left: The ridge under Mt. Veleta in the Sierra Nevada. Veleta means "weather vane" and this mountain, at around 3400m, is the second highest in the Sierra Nevada, topped only by its neighbour, Mulhacén, at 3479m.

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Left: *Erodium rupicola* photo ZZ

Information from [the internet](#):

“*Erodium rupicola* is endemic to the southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (Algarra et al. 2011). Its main subpopulation occurs at Sierra de Filabres (Almería), being also present in Sierra Nevada (Granada) and, less frequently, in Sierra de Baza (Granada). It can be found in three locations, comprising at least 17 subpopulations. Its area of occupancy has been reported to be 34 km².”



Right: *Erodium cheilanthifolium* 'White Pearls' - A selection made at Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery, Oregon, by [Baldassare Mineo](#). It has grey-green foliage; white flowers with translucent veins.

Photograph by [Donn Reiners](#), courtesy of [Ms Robin Parer](#) of 'Geraniaceae' in California.

“These intricate **corkscrew seed heads** (below) are one of the things that make erodium so successful. During periods of dry and wet, the corkscrew expands and contracts, driving the seeds into the ground”.
Photo: Nhu Nguyen, [President PBS](#).

