

Northumberland [Hexham] Show

The border country of Southern Scotland which stretches into Cumbria and Northumberland is wild and beautiful. In some weather conditions it is bleak. When we left Dunblane it was a beautiful morning and the weather continued fair till we left Cumbria, then the heavens opened and rain and sleet battered the windscreen. It was a wet entry to the show but at least no-one was cluttering up the doorway and we could quickly get our SRGC stuff into the hall. Hexham show hall is huge. It is the sports centre and it, itself is now dwarfed by the new swimming pool. With all these facilities and a Waitrose supermarket, the car-park was very busy. Thanks to the members of the AGS group we did not have to pay charges as they had arranged passes to place in the windscreen. This and the welcoming coffee and biscuits were much appreciated.



Like Blackpool, this show is a joint one run by the SRGC and the AGS, so it gives us another chance to meet friends from much further south. The top award this year was a Farrer medal which deservedly went to Geoff Mawson's exquisite *Trillium rivale* 'reticulate veined form' [left].

Geoff is AGS assistant director of shows and he travels far and works hard for the AGS. It was a well deserved triumph.

SRGC Council member Christine Boulby, from Aklington was entering her first show and scooped the Northumberland trophy for new exhibitors with a fine pan of *Muscari aucheri* 'Ocean Magic' [left]. This is hopefully the beginning of a long showing career!

Ian Kidman won the AGS medal for both the large and the small six pan classes, a considerable triumph but Ian has done this before. [below]. Here are his twelve wonderful pans of alpine.

real can see

cushions and no it comes to Paraquilegia. will be able to see pinnatifida at the up residence at Edinburgh.

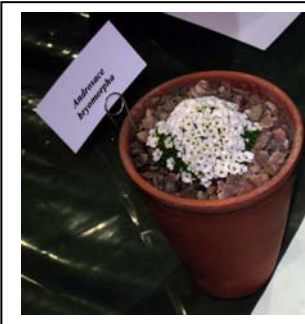
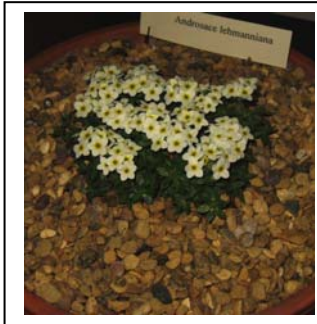


As you lan is a wizard with slouch either when Cyclamen and Scottish gardeners the Synthyris back when it takes the RBG

The show had a huge number of excellent plants and I will apologise now to those great growers whose fine exhibits I do not mention. My report tries to give the flavour of the show and not just a list of the prize-winners.

Primulaceae reach their pinnacle and diversity and quality at this time of year and while you can argue about their relative merits the genera of *Primula* itself, *Dionysia*, *Cyclamen*

and Androsace bring much colour and interest to the show benches. While some Primulas and Cyclamen can be grown in the open garden others in these genera demand very special attention and much dedication from their owners. The first three Androsaces below are difficult to please in cultivation while the next is much easier and the fifth used to be a Douglasia and should also do outside.



Three rare
Androsace
s.
A. lehmanniana
A. tangulashanaensis



Species within a plant family often look quite different from other members. To a non-botanist it is difficult at first to see that Androsaces, Primulas and Cyclamen are related. Of the latter genus there was a well flowered specimen of *Cyclamen libanoticum* on the benches. Many years ago a much larger plant took the top award at Morecambe but its flowers were no larger than these. I find it a difficult species to please, especially to keep good leaves, so I was captivated by this excellent plant.



Primula elatior ssp
pseudoelatios



Primula 'Linda
Pope'



Primula 'Netta
Dennis'



Fritillaria davidii



Soldanella 'Sudden
Spring'



Pleione
forrestii



Fritillaria yuminensis



Ranunculus
alpestris



Townsendia
excapa



Disa species



Cypripedium formosum



Rannunculus asiaticus red form





Organisers and exhibitors run out of steam eventually and need a rest. The sequence of pictures brings to mind the song 10 Green Bottles hanging on a wall and we are down to 3. Rename it '10 Rock Gardeners standing at a show' a when 1 rock gardener left to tend his bulbs, there were 9.....

Some plants which caught my eye





These photos are of a mixture of plants mainly from section B and C.
Some crackers here! And a song 'Tulips from Hexham Show'



The show hall looks good from both ends. I love this dark pink and white *Pieris japonica* KATSURA and at the opposite end of the spectrum a delicate wee *Polygonatum tenuicaule*.

Benthamiella longifolia is a member of the Solanaceae family. Looking at the flowers I find it difficult to relate them to belladonna and potatoes. The family includes *Datura* (Jimson weed), mandrake, deadly nightshade (belladonna), capsicum (paprika, chili pepper), potato, tobacco, tomato, eggplant and petunia. Perhaps a wee cushion Petunia is the best way to look at it, just as Androsace is a wee cushion Primrose. According to Peter Erskine quoted on the on the internet, "The genus *Benthamiella* was first described in 1883. It is endemic to Patagonia, centred on the southern province of Santa Cruz, with some occurring in the adjacent Chilean province of Magallanes. All species form cushions or mats with small narrow, imbricate leaves and more or less sessile, tubular flowers carried either amongst or closely above the foliage. In several species, the mouth of the flower widens into a funnel and in *B. longifolia*, it flares more widely to give a striking, flat-faced, white flower. Flowers are generally white to pale yellow, but in *B. patagonica* may be a rich golden-yellow and in *B. nordenskjoeldii* they may be flushed with violet. The various collections of seeds that have been made during expeditions, and attempts at cultivation are described." At Hexham there were fabulous plants of *B. longifolia* and *B. patagonica*.



Violas are not usually top of a list of desirable alpines but these two are pretty exquisite. Either would delight Eliza Doolittle but I am sure that to get specimens like these the



As you can see we had a superb show at Hexham. Thank to Waitrose for the trolleys to carry the plants back to the car! *Sandy Leven*