

Primroses

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In this issue

President's Message	3
Primula Cusickiana.....	4
by Irene Buckles	
Primulas at the Chelsea Flower Show - 1982	9
by Bernard M. Smith	
Blue Ridge Mountain Notes	10
by James F. Long	
Primrose Show Coming On.....	13
by Thelma Nelson	
Changing Names On A Caucasian Oxslip	14
by Jerry J. Flintoff	
A New Look at Double Auriculas in the United Kingdom.....	15
by Bernard M. Smith	
Stalking the Primroses of Yesteryear.....	17
by John W. Martin	
Variations on Border Auricula ..	20
by Thea Service Foster	
Spring Is Just Not Spring Without Primroses	22
by Beryl W. Orchard	
Elizabeth Van Sickle - APS Recording Secretary	23
From the Mailbox.....	24



On the cover

Exceptional photographs of an extraordinary American species, Primula Cusickiana, taken this Spring by Irene Buckles. See page 4. Background photo - P. Cusickiana at home in the Wallowa Mountains, Oregon.

President's message

Summer has now gone. It was kind to me and my Primroses. I hope it was the same with you; being busy dividing, repotting and transplanting. As always, it never gets all done when the work should be; so, I continue the process on into late fall, early winter, and as long as the weather is mild. Sometimes a sudden and severe cold spell makes me wish I had stopped transplanting and dividing sooner.

Along with this issue comes the annual dues notice. Prompt payment simplifies the treasurer's job considerably. Chapter treasurers please note that this is the first time the Chapter can collect the APS dues from its members and keep one dollar (or ten percent) for chapter activities. The year's dues must be collected and all dues sent in at one time to the APS treasurer before December 15. Be sure to have each member's name complete with the correct address and zip code. The chapter will not qualify for any benefits from dues by individuals making direct payments to the APS treasurer or from dues collected and forwarded after December 15.

Several years ago the APS had a National Auricula Show and a National Candelebra Show. These shows were very successful. Next spring the Lewis County Primrose Society is sponsoring a National Auricula and Late Flowering Primula Show at the Lewis County Mall on May 7th and 8th, 1983. The Lewis County Mall is located between Chehalis and Centralia, Washington. Mark this date on your calendar and plan to visit the show and if possible, enter plants. The sales tables will have a selection of auriculas and species not generally available at the earlier spring shows.

It would also be very nice to have a volunteer group to sponsor a candelebra and late flowering species show in June of this next year. It is not too late to plan a show for this next late spring. Shows for the public are a lot of work; but, satisfying and pleasurable work. This is where we meet old friends and make new ones. Most important, it is here we are able to introduce our favorite plants to new growers, attract members and start people growing primroses.

The American Horticulture Society is having a 60th anniversary celebration of its 1922 founding. The theme is 60. There will be sixty horticulture or plant societies with displays represented at the AHS headquarters in Virginia on October 15th for one big day. The American Primrose Society has been invited and will be represented. A report of this important affair will be in the Winter Quarterly.

May this winter be kind to you and your plants.

Herb Dickson

Primula Cusickiana

by Irene Buckles
Seattle, Washington

The subject of *Primula Cusickiana* pops up in conversation among primrosers, but only occasionally. There have been infrequent articles written about it and very rarely a photo published. Very few people know anything about this native American primula and many have never heard of either the botanist Cusick or his "Wallowa Primrose" as it has come to be known.

In the beginning, curiosity played the major part in wanting to find this elusive primula. In fact, knowledge of the Wallowa Mountains was previously obtained (before our interest in primula) in search of *Lewisia columbiana* var. *Wallowensis*. Only after gaining considerable knowledge about primroses and joining the American Primrose Society, was notice taken during discussions about an Oregon native primrose that no one seemed to be able to keep under cultivation any length of time. These conversations were generalizations, with no specific detail on either its location or cultural requirements. Articles on the subject gave good general information, such as botanical descriptions and general habitat, but it wasn't concise enough. We decided to find *Primula Cusickiana* ourselves.

Everyone familiar with this primula knew that *P. Cusickiana* grew on the road to Hat Point, located in Northeastern Oregon, but it was apparent no one could (or would) describe to us a more specific location. Some said they had found it in meadows hiding in the grass, many mentioned that it grew within the vicinity of Ponderosa pine, while others said it grew on cliffs that you had to hang over in

order to even see the plant and still others said the primrose grew on hillsides with running water. Only one road leads to Hat Point and it begins at Imnaha. This 26 mile stretch of extremely rough road runs along the sharp ridge top between the Imnaha River on the west and the Snake River Canyon on the east. When looking for a plant never actually seen, this becomes a lot of area to cover.

One helpful person was found, Mrs. Tewinkel of La Grande, Oregon, who had collected *P. Cusickiana* seed. It was late May when she wrote back indicating it would be too late to find the primrose blooming. Starting out anyway in June of 1981, so sure of success, it was quickly discovered Mrs. Tewinkel was right. There had been a very early spring and no traces of *P. Cusickiana* were found.

This last spring we decided to outwit Mother Nature by starting this search in early May. Unfortunately, it had been a very late spring, and snowed in the mountains the night before arriving at Imnaha. Part of the road had been plowed, allowing the journey to continue up the mountain. The farther we went, the higher the snow banks became—finally being forced to stop where the snowplow has stopped—15 foot piles of snow were on both sides of the road.

Bound and determined to find the "Wallowa Primrose", Hat Point was once again attempted on June 16, 1982. Even in mid June a lot of snow was found. We began going through small patches of snow until finally being stopped by a drift that was impassable. Figuring the vehicle

would be able to go through easily enough with a little shoveling, we decided to first walk farther up the road to see how much more snow lay ahead. On the way back to the truck a detour was made to walk along the ridge, looking for plants growing down the bank. About one-hundred feet off the road just over the edge of the ridge, we found our treasure! This trip must have been the proverbial third time charm. Here was a large patch of the most gorgeous blue flowers we had ever seen. We knew instantly that this was *Primula Cusickiana* even before getting close enough to correctly identify it. The excitement was indescribable—an elation—a joy—that probably only someone who has had a similar experience can understand. After seeing *P. Cusickiana* in nature, we finally understood why people were so reluctant to divulge its location.

Now the real work began—photographing, taking notes, measuring. Most of the flowers were a deep violet-blue with a gold-eye, slightly farinose. No white or rose forms were found, and only a couple of pale blue plants. The flowers had four to six petals, mostly five; most petals notched and ribbed, 1.3 to 2 mm. across, with one to seven flowers per scape, mostly three. An interesting observation, both thrum and pin-eyes were found. *P. Cusickiana* has a bright green rosette formed from smooth, non-mealy leaves 1.2 to 1.8 mm. wide and 5 to 8 mm. long. A slight violet fragrance was noticed, but it was not overwhelming. In fact, we had to put our noses right close to the flowers before detecting any odor at all.

Two patches of plants were found growing quite close together, yet they were separate distinct colonies. The first patch was in full bloom on this June 17th, growing on a large southwestern facing rock outcropping. Large evergreens farther down the

slope provided early morning shade, while other evergreens on the top of the ridge gave late afternoon shade. The entire outcropping was carpeted with moss (*Tortula* ssp.). Intermingled with the primroses were *Erythronium grandiflorum* (dog-toothed violet), *Rubiace* ssp. (stick-tight), foliose lichen, sedum and a small-growing fern, all indicators of spring wetness and summer dryness. The second patch was facing south, without trees close by, but with a constant stream of water running through the primulas. The *P. Cusickiana* were growing either on top of small rocks or on mounds of soil; keeping the plants high enough so their crowns were out of the water but their roots constantly wet. This colony was almost out of bloom and had started forming seed pods.

The seed capsule itself is very unique with five vertical stripes of pronounced farina (meal). As the seed capsules develop the leaves begin to die down. One seed capsule was collected at this time, after trying to find the one appearing the most mature. As an experiment, the seeds were planted in a pop-bottle terrarium, placing the container in the refrigerator, removing it for a couple of days, and then returning it to the cold. So far none of the seeds in the terrarium have germinated.

According to available information—growth, flowering, seed production and final disappearance occur within a period of five months. This seems to be about right from what could be observed by returning in late August to collect seed. Everything was baked dry at this time. Although the plants had not disappeared entirely, it was difficult to collect a large quantity of seed as hoped. As the seed pod dries, the cap falls away, leaving an "urn" of seed to be knocked out and scattered by the strong gusts of wind blowing down the canyon. The first

continued



Primula Cusickiana

photo by I. Buckles



Primula Cusickiana

photo by I. Buckles



Primula Cusickiana

photo by I. Buckles

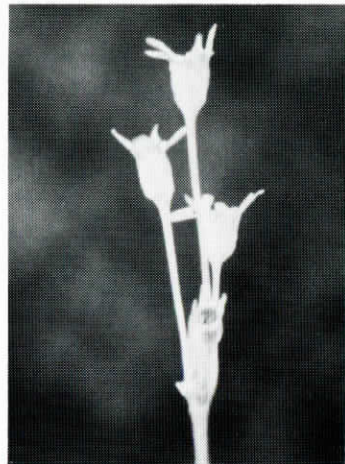


Primula Cusickiana

photo by I. Buckles



Primula Cusickiana in seed stage



photos by I. Buckles

part of August would have been a better time to collect seed.

Two other locations of *P. Cusickiana* were pointed out by Marvin Black of the American Rock Garden Society. These two areas certainly didn't have easy access. The terrain had a more rugged appearance, with the altitude a bit higher. The plants were in full sun, shaded only by the overhanging rocks. Collecting seed here was a challenge, requiring a person to lay face down on an overhang while reaching down into the crevices for the seed pods. Here, a collector would be looking straight down to the river several hundred feet below.

Lewisia columbiana var. *Wallowensis* was found growing amidst the primroses, an unlikely combination. Another surprise, *P. Cusickiana* was not found growing near any Ponderosa pine, (as some finders had written about). The few seeds that were collected on this last journey will be planted in December or January in hopes of nature taking over and allowing some seedlings to sprout.

Even after three of these nine-hour drives from Seattle, Washington, to Imnaha, Oregon, in search of the *P.*

Cusickiana, both in bloom and to collect seed, there was not enough time to learn many details about the plant. Many more hours of investigation are needed. Observations indicate that *P. Cusickiana* doesn't grow just anywhere in the Wallowas; but where it does grow it usually forms large patches. A soil sample from the first colony tested out at a pH of 5.8.

Further investigation and research on the Wallowa primrose is just the beginning. A challenge would be to find it in the Wallowa foothills in Union County, Oregon, where the species was first located and collected by William Cusick. It is also reported to grow in northern Nevada and in western Idaho. Sources indicate it also grows in the Blue Mountains, which extend into southeastern Washington. It would be exciting to find *P. Cusickiana* at these locations and record differences or similarities with the Oregon plants; also variations in terrain, weather and soil conditions. Being able to grow and flower this lovely primula in cultivation and then to enter *P. Cusickiana* in a show would be the ultimate satisfaction.

Primulas at the Chelsea Flower Show - 1982

Bernard M. Smith
Gravesend, England

The Chelsea Flower Show held annually in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, London, England, draws entries from all quarters of the globe. There one can see the finest and most up-to-date examples of the Horticultural arts. That is except for Primulas. Occasionally one sees a few polyanthus or perhaps *P. helodoxa* and *P. Waltonii* or even, as there was this year, some yellow cowslips; but since about 1966 Show Auriculas have not been seen at Chelsea until this year.

It is not easy to ensure that Show Auriculas, Alpines and Doubles together with Cowichan, Gold and Silver Laced Polyanthuses are all in bloom together in the middle of May; but APS member Mrs. Brenda Hyatt of 1 Toddington Crescent, Blue Bell Hill, Chatham, Kent, did just that to earn the Lindley Medal which the Judges awarded to her exhibit.

Brenda, who exhibits at the R.H.S. Monthly Shows in London, already has been awarded the Silver Flora Medal and the Silver Banksiam Medal and now has added the Silver Lindley Medal to her awards. She used to specialize in miniature Pelargoniums and double Busy Lizzies (*Impatiens*) amongst other things, but a few years ago she decided to specialize in her old love, Auriculas, and today is well on the way to becoming one of the leading Auricula Nurseries in England.

Whilst most of the Gardening Press failed to appreciate the importance of Brenda's exhibit at Chelsea, 'The Financial Times' Columnist, Robin Lane Fox, wrote praising her and said

"She wins my bouquet for the exhibit of the year" and in the 'Daily Telegraph', Fred Whitsey devoted nearly a third of his article to Mrs. Hyatt and her Primulas. In 'Country Life' (one of our leading magazines) Elizabeth Jane Howard, writing on her first visit to Chelsea on Press Day, said "I came across a stand of Auriculas by Brenda Hyatt. They were marvelous and perfect... There was only one other stand that gave me as much pleasure and that was Cawthornes display of violas".

With the commencement of the APS and the NAPS(S) plant exchange no doubt in time some of those fine U.S. cultivars will be appearing in Mrs. Hyatt's exhibits both at the R.H.S. halls and at Chelsea. Brenda would be pleased to hear from APS members who have such plants available.

Brenda's exhibit at Chelsea this year included many of the Gordon Douglas Auriculas (Shows and Alpines), Double Auriculas, both Barnhaven and Balcom strain (the latter raised from Cy Happy's seed), Cowichan Polyanthus and some of the Gold Laced and Silver Laced Polyanthus from 'Windways'. The exhibit drew crowds of visitors many of whom had never seen such plants before. The Judges were pleased enough to award the exhibit the Silver Lindley Medal.

This year the Chelsea Flower Show was found to be excellent, if overcrowded. The new Roses, Carnations, Orchids, Bonsai, in fact all were all worth the visit, but for many Brenda Hyatt's stand was the highlight of it all.

Blue Ridge Mountain Notes

by James F. Long
Marion, Virginia

Enough time has now passed to review what responses came from the idea of preserving the primrose and other florist flowers including of course, the Show and Alpine Auricula of exhibitors (Vol. 40, No. 1).

Preserving Old Florist Flowers

Actually, there is a great deal more interest than I had thought. In this day and age there still exist enthusiastic horticulturists who hope to improve and pass on the plants that have given so much beauty and joy to other generations. A person looking back through the history of Primula quickly sees it took only a few floriculturists to give us the plants we treasure. Without this dedicated handful, many flowers in cultivation today would be only memories of past generations.

Some of the suggestions brought forth intensified the need to assure that the treasured plants will be widely distributed in the event any one grower is no longer able to care for the plants.

A very good idea made by an overseas member was to have them registered by the APS and accepted into a civic trust garden. An open garden would also allow the general public to see and learn to appreciate the various forms. This concept is already being done on some of the old florist flowers.

Public trust gardens are located in both England and Scotland; and hopefully someday, the Berry Gardens at Portland, Oregon in the USA. If all goes well, other gardens and herbariums will be appointed where plants and seeds can be donated to be kept and preserved for future societies. Without this type of effort, there would be precious little

work by the dedicated few. I dearly hope this labor will go on, but it takes really dedicated individuals to do these time consuming projects. The Primrose Society should encourage the few sources that offer a wide range of primula and help them all they can.

One such dedicated person is Mrs. Florence Bellis, who gave primula growers the first strain of separate color seed as well as an outstanding strain of double primroses. This work has been carried on by Mr. Sinclair of Barnhaven, Kendal, England. Floriculturists are fortunate to have this source of seed, which can be obtained from Far North Gardens in Livonia, Michigan.

The same story can be said of show auriculas, Mr. Gordon Douglas is the only commercial source of this specialized seed which is otherwise difficult to come by.

Mrs. Rosetta Jones and Mrs. Ruth Huston also have primrose seed strains and plants that can be incorporated into a line for future development and perpetuation. There may be others, but contact with them is lacking. What is important to understand, is there is very little primula hybridizing and propagation taking place on a large scale. Yet, present growers still have some varieties with which to hybridize (the next generations may not have this same opportunity).

Another idea put forth (and indeed probably the most likely to get older varieties into the hands of other "interested" people) is to share seed and plants with other enthusiastic growers who will strive to improve their culture and grow strains on which other interested propagators can

begin and carry on with the work of preservation.

Now it is up to primula enthusiasts to use these strains and breed their own lines and divulge new ideas.

After receiving the responses from the winter Quarterly, I am positive there are other private growers developing double auriculas and primroses as well as the old Gold Lace, Jack-in-Green, etc. These sources should not be ignored. The only way to avoid losing these valuable historic plants is to insure they will be passed on to other concerned primula growers.

Members of the Society must and will move forward on this issue. I feel certain that this will happen, for who among us would not want our children to have the joy we behold in these plants?

To walk down the primrose path on an early spring morning with the dew still on the heads and blossoms; or, in a gentle rain that soothes the earth, is indeed a wonderful moment in time.

Seeing a seedling auricula open for the first time and realize it has some show quality; to the auricula grower, is to stand in awe of God's creative power, and the desire to share it with others.

There are people who see a tree as just a green object or something that enamors us with the drop of its leaves, yet others see great beauty within its reaching form and understand the wonderful product of leaf humus that our primula thrive in, as well as its patterned moving shade and other uses. Members of the APS should put forth more effort to show and share the beauty of their flowers; only then will others be able to start growing them.

Another idea that I feel is possible, is to encourage commercial growers to propagate and sell named exhibition Show and Alpine auriculas. As for myself, if there was such a grower, I would willingly furnish some extra

offsets. I am not referring to a grower who will grow them for just one season, but a nursery that will look to the future and provide a steady supply for all. Perhaps others would be willing to do this also, if they can be guaranteed the plants will be propagated. Since offsets of these plants are very scarce all over the world, the donor would want to be sure they will not be lost through lack of care. Growers could obtain a few named plants and cross them for seed and perhaps raise a strain of their own — always looking to quality.

Some growers of a particular plant have already been put in contact with others of like interest, and many new friends have been made. It does seem that if members can make their ideas known, then growers with similar interests can be found.

Time goes so quickly — do not waste it but work for the future, and hope another generation will carry it on.

Let us also remember that the old does not have to be lost to give room for the new. They always have stood side by side.

The Auricula

I noted in the Quarterly a short note on comparison of named varieties of auricula being very similar in color. Well, this is where most similarities end, as no two varieties I have grown seem to respond to the same culture, or even two plants of the same variety.

To me its challenge is to be able to flower the same plant for years at high standards; this is really the quest.

Another quirk; the Show Auricula plants do not respond to the same culture for different growers. One person can grow them well and then another grower, even close by, can't get the same plant to thrive at all. There are some plants I have not been able to grow, yet others will say they grow like weeds.

An English friend of mine made a



Show Alpine Auricula Seedling raised by J. Long

photo by J. Long



Silver laced-red ground polyanthus, raised by J. Long

photo by J. Long

suggestion that to grow ones own seedlings is a good thing, as they will be suitable to climate and growing conditions; I heartily agree. The Auricula is really a beautiful and complex plant and a real challenge to any grower.

Hopefully, now that there is getting to be some Show quality seedlings and named plants in USA, we will see a greater interest in the Auricula and its development.

The Exhibition Auricula survival was doubtful a few years ago, but now seems to be on the way up. Let us hope so and strive to see that we spare no effort in its culture and distribution.

It is to be hoped, as the article noted: the slight differences will be admired by others, and the quest taken up to grow their own.

•••••

Primrose Show Coming On

*by Thelma Nelson
Tacoma, Washington*

Have you ever gone out walking
In the dawning of the spring?
Did you see the Persian carpet
that our precious Julies bring?
Polyanthus tall and stately
Umbels full of blossoms too
makes you think of Sunday dress ups
In their rich and pastel hues
Blue acaulis how I love them
Nestling in the morning dew
Glistening from the evening's dampness
Golden stars in shades of blue
Auriculas are trim and tailored
Surely royal blood is there
If you know a more regal flower
Please just tell me where
Put them all together
Species added to the view
Tables ribbons tags and entries
Some thing brought strange or new
Another show, another year
Time keeps marching on—
We pray again all join hands
To keep our Primrose Show coming on

Dedicated to Miss Rosa Peterson

Changing Names On A Caucasian Oxslip

by Jerry J. Flintoff
Seattle, Washington

Among the Vernales the name *Primula amoena* continually whets the species lover's quest for this much discussed and even more frequently impostered plant. The problem of obtaining the true species in a pure state sports a long history as such classic garden horticultural writers as E. A. Bowles¹, Reginald Farrer² and Corsar³ attest. Mr. Farrer commenting that the "name has too long served in gardens as a disguise for *P. acaulis rubra* (i.e. *Sibthorpii*, ed)", and "is, in point of fact, a perfectly distinct and lovely species which has passed into undeserved oblivion. It may be roughly described as a mauve or purple Polyanthus"⁴. The ravishing colored photograph in Collin's *Guide to Alpines* (t. 24)⁵ and the graceful line drawing in Dorothy Klaber's classic text⁶, no doubt continue to attract many devotees. In Collin's *Guide to Alpines* it is described as a plant of good temper and a vigorous grower, while Dorothy Klaber wistfully narrates a tale of failure.

Netting this elusive primula critter comprises the first step in understanding and appreciating its subtleties; for aliases trap the unwary. Fortunately the Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery has been able to supply *P. amoena* for the last several years. Seed, offered by the various rock garden society seed exchanges, may or may not yield the desired plant. The versions currently in Northwest gardens do not quite par up with Collin's plate, but is nonetheless a very pleasant greyed-mauve "polyanthus"; similar in form to the oxslip (*P. elatior*).

P. amoena thrives easily in the Pacific Northwest gardens under the same conditions as the other Vernales enjoy: i.e. half-shade and moist, but well-drained humusy soil. Divisions, taken after flowering or in autumn, provide additional planting stock along with seed (which is rather sparsely set).

Ingwersen comments that the flowers, normally lavender to violet blue, may vary to yellow, and "always with a good yellow eye"⁷, seems to be based upon some misunderstanding. White-flowered forms however occur.

Since *P. amoena*'s first appearance in print in the early 1800's, several botanical workers have tried to reduce its name to a variety of the oxslip, although such a move never has received widespread support. Two British botanists recently concluded this plant is actually a sub-species of the oxslip and it will now bear the new name *P. elatior* subsp. *meyeri*⁸. These specialists base their reclassification upon three criteria; (1) *P. amoena* crosses easily with most of the other known subspecies of the oxslip and the seed of this cross produces very fertile progeny; (2) the difference in flower color is comparable with that of *P. vulgaris* and its subspecies *Sibthorpii* and *heterochroma*; (3) earlier ideas about differences in capsule length are recognized as being based upon the effects of cultivation on *P. amoena*.

Valentine and Lamond speculate that even though *P. elatior* subsp. *meyeri* and *P. vulgaris* subsp. *Sibthorpii*'s natural geographical

ranges overlap, the results of their experimental crosses do not favor the prospect of gene-exchange, and consequently the bluish or violet flower color of *P. meyeri* probably does not owe its origin to *P. Sibthorpii*.

Plant Sources for *P. elatior* subsp. *meyeri* (*amoena*):

Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery, 2568 Jackson Hwy., Chehalis, Washington 98532.

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A New Look at Double Auriculas in the United Kingdom

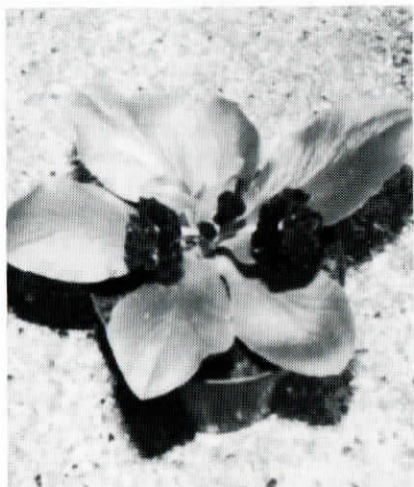
by Bernard M. Smith
Gravesend, England

In the last few years I have been interested in Double Auriculas; and thanks to good friends, now have healthy plants of Camelot, Doublet, Walton Heath and Zambia. I also have about 50 seedlings from Barnhaven seed and some 20 from seed received from Cy Happy, which are showing great promise. Unfortunately, I only raised three seedlings of Balcom Strain semi-doubles from the seven packets of seed bought through the APS exchange scheme. Many of my seedlings are yet to flower, so next Spring should be an exciting experience for me.

The early history of Double Auriculas is recorded in the Herbals and other ancient books written by our predecessors in the *Primula* growing business, but alas, most of the varieties mentioned are hard to come by, and in any case, most (cultivars for the purist) are now long gone. We should be more concerned with the modern Florists who re-introduced the Doubles to *Primula* lovers the world over, and with their successors who are now leading the world in growing and showing today.

continued

I had read of the varieties raised by Miss Wayne of Avoca in Ireland, and of the work done by Mrs. Denna Snuffer and Ralph Balcom. I know how Dr. E. Lester Smith re-introduced the Doubles to the United Kingdom and how Kenneth Gould has been responsible for breeding so many fine plants. But, things change and time passes, and I began to wonder who were the leaders in the Double Auricula field located the United Kingdom today, and what were the leading varieties being shown.



Double auricula from seed of Cy Happy
photo by B. Smith

Once more I consulted the Show Results in the Year Books of the Northern, Midland and Southern Sections of the National Auricula and Primula Society. I used the period 1976 to 1981 (not all the 1982 issues were published when this was written) and listed the winning exhibitors in each Section; and awarded three points for a First, two points for a Second and one point for a Third. I also listed how many times each variety took a prize. The results of this study follow.

Double Auricula Growers scoring the highest points

Northern	Pts.
Dr. G. Black	14
J.N. Gibson	12
A.K. Guest	11
Mrs. G. Baker	10
L.A. Bailey	10
R. Cole	9

Midland	Pts.
Mrs. G. Baker	21
H.A. Cohen	17
Mrs. H. Wood	11
C.A. Hawkes	8
B. Walker	7
Mrs. E. Green	6

Southern	Pts.
Mrs. G. Baker	33
C.A. Hawkes	26
H.A. Cohen	18
F.D. Jennings	18
C.M. Hecker	15
K. Gould	9

The Top 12 Winning Double Auriculas

Mary (29 times)
Catherine (23 times)
Maid Marian (15 times)
Susannah (10 times)
Sarah Lodge (9 times)
Jayne Myers (8 times)
Camelot (24 times)
Doublet (18 times)
Walton Heath (11 times)
Marigold (10 times)
Diamond (8 times)
Sir Robert (8 times)

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Stalking The Primroses of Yesteryear

by John W. Martin
Tupsley, England

I am one of a small band in this country of England, trying to build up a collection of the older named *P. verna*les, Doubles, Jacks-in-the-Green, Hose-in-Hose and of course Singles.

Up until the 1950's, the old varieties seem to have been readily available. Impressive listings in catalogues were issued by specialist nurseries. Since the fifties there has been a catastrophic decline in both the number of varieties offered and in nurseries offering them. In spite of this lack of plants, some recent publications indicate they are freely available. In truth, apart from 'Alba plena', 'Lilacena plena' and 'Marie Crousse' among the doubles, 'Wanda Hose' and 'Tipperary Purple' Jack-in-the-Green, it is exceedingly difficult to find any of the old anomalous forms in commerce.

Availability among Single primroses is a little better. Diligent searching would yield about thirty named single varieties, but none going back to pre-Primula Juliae or Garryarde days.

All the older varieties (with the exception of the three Doubles named above), seem to show characteristics of some *P. Juliae* blood, this indicates many can be no older than seventy five years, with some of the 'older varieties' much younger. The vast number of Julianas bred into the primroses in the interwar years (1918-1938) seem to have ousted the older *vulgaris* types. These Juliana hybrids have in turn, been largely superseded in most gardens and nurseries by the flood of modern polyanthus, so easily raised from seed.

The last nursery offering a large selection of *P. vulgaris* anomalous forms, including its famous Glazeley strain, was Glazeley Gardens of Bridgnorth, Shropshire. Glazeley ceased to offer primula in the 1960's (or earlier) after the unfortunate loss of most of his stock. This disaster was due to the drifting of herbicidal spray from an adjoining farmland.

It is possible, after one delves deeper into the primrose culture, to find small semi-private growers who can offer a few doubles and singles, but no Jacks-in-the-Green or Hose-in-Hose other than two common ones. Fearing that most of these fascinating plants have gone forever, our primrose societies must rely on the increasing number of modern varieties to fill the gap.

Legendary 'old ladys' in Ireland, who are alleged to have a wonderful collection, I'm afraid no longer exist. One such written to, over ninety years of age, had sold all her plants. The most famous of them, a lady from Limavady, died some years ago and her celebrated garden is now a ploughed field. A vast expenditure on postage stamps has been used on following up every lead. On one or two occasions it was found that the writings had been to the dead. Letters were returned marked 'Gone Away'.

However, by persisting, dedicated floriculturists will finally manage to locate most of the private collections still in existence in England. Once inside the charmed circle of keen collectors, and it takes some penetrating as none advertise the fact, the situation improves dramatically.

Many of the old Doubles are still grown and plenty of Singles, but few Jacks-in-the-Green or Hose-in-Hose. Major difficulties arise when no collector will sell, only exchange plants, and until one gets a decent selection to swap progress is slow. From lists of private collectors, about fifteen to twenty old Doubles are still in existence and between eighty to a hundred Singles.

With so few historic plants available and so difficult to acquire, it is not possible to be a purist and confine oneself to the old varieties. Only in the case of Singles is it possible to have a collection of antiquities. Anomalous forms from a good number of various sources, including some raised from seed (although unnamed), can be obtained. A person intending to grow them on, should select only the very best and name them before distribution. Occasionally one will get good named anomalous forms from the growers who have raised the plants. These names should, of course, be carefully preserved and recorded.

Being fortunate in growing plants in the wetter, western part of England, in soil that seems to suit them, a good single head will produce five or six offsets in a year capable of division and growing on. New acquisitions are always grown in pots and treated very generously with plenty of water and high potash fertilizer to encourage strong growth and offsets. Only in the potted plants are special treatment received. Plants in the open ground grow much slower.

No luck has been obtained with propagation through root cuttings, but it has been found that the old superseded rootstocks will produce several small plantlets if placed half buried in a pot of compost, (rather as if they were iris rhizomes). If this is done in the spring, plants are large enough to pot up separately by autumn.

With the increasing number of persons in England propagating and distributing the old named forms, those primroses still in existence should be reasonably safe. However, the majority are probably gone for ever. Not knowing what the situation is in America regarding the old primroses, it would be interesting to hear from anyone with the same interest in preserving these plants. Perhaps an exchange could be considered if the plant health regulations do not prove too difficult to overcome.

Mr. John W. Martin
45, Seaton Avenue
Tupsley, Hereford HR1 1NP,
England

Listing by John Martin of Named Primroses known to be under cultivation in England

Single Julianas; (from very old to quite recent): Sibthorpii(1), Altaica grandiflora(1), Perle von Bottrop, McWatt's Cream, Blütenrissen, Groenken's Glory, Wanda, Eila, Lady Greer, Lady Greer Pink, Kinlough Beauty, Old Port(2), Tawny Port(2), Snow White, Garryarde Guinevere, Lopen Red, Lingwood Beauty, Iris Mainwaring, Romeo, Beamish Foam, Blue Riband, Gloriosa, White Wanda, Cherry, Queen of the Whites, Wanda Improved, MacWatt's Claret, Lambrook Peach, Dorothy, Devon Red Cowslip, Craven Gem. (1) *different names for same P. vulgaris*; (2) *are quite distinct*.

Named Old Primroses under Cultivation in Great Britain and Ireland: Doubles (all are *P. vulgaris*, except where stated) Alba plena (old double white), Lilacena plena (Quaker's Bonnet), Bon Accord Gem, Bon Accord Lilac, Bon Accord Purple, Out Pat (Juliana), Marie Crousse I (violet pink—common one), Chevithorne Pink, Red Paddy, William Chalmers, Cloth of Gold, Arthur Du Moulin, Crimson King,

Elizabeth Dickie, Snow Ball, Glazeley Silver, Maid Marian, Marie Crousse II (Lavender—rare one), Lady Isobel, Chevithorne Purple, Double Sulphur. *Anomalous* (not all ancient) Wanda Hose, Tipperary Purple Jack, Margery Fish Jack, Greensleeves-pantaloon, Arlington—Jack, Gold Lace Polyanthus Hose, P. Veris (cowslip)—Hose, Pembrokeshire Jack, Ariel Jack. *Singles* Barrowby Gem, Osiered Amber, Purpurkissen, Garryarde Sir Galahad, Mrs. MacGillavry, Betty Green, Sibthorpii Six Petalled Frilled (Wendy?), Garryarde white, Wanda's Rival, David

Green, Viridiflora (green flowered *P. vulgaris*), *P. vulgaris*—Polyanthus form, Blue Horizon, Reine Des Violettes, Garryarde Enchantress, Garryarde Grail, Garryarde Victory, Lizzie Green, Purple Cushion, Lambrook Yellow, Yardwell's White, E.R. Janes, Old Court, Crimson Queen, Garnet, Wisley Red, Buckland Cream, Buckland Wine, Buckland Primrose, Mauve Queen, Tomato, Dr. Molly, Craddock White, Crispilii, Lambrook Pink, Old Devon White, Pink Foam, Snow Cushion, The Bride, Chartreuse, Lambrook Ivory.



Primula vulgaris 'Sue Jervis'

A new chance double seedling offered by Bressingham Gardens Nursery, England, Spring Catalogue, 1982

Variegations on Border Auricula

by Thea Service Foster

West Vancouver, British Columbia

Border Auriculas are grown in such widely separated areas – Britain, Eastern North America, Mid North America and the Pacific Northwest, for example. How can conformity to a standard be established under this handicap?

The Alpine, Self and Edged Show Auricula have such formality of proportion in their flowers that their form could be set down on paper with draughting instruments. Any novice should be able to recognize these requirements as to shape of petals, proportion of colour zones in Alpines and Edged types, size of centre and tube.

Judging from photos, Border Auriculas are quite variable.

Considering Jimmy Long's suggestion (Spring 1982, Vol. 40, No. 2) that we send in our ideas for standards; a few ideas have come to mind.

The mention of the word "Border" as applied to Auriculas immediately brings forth the image of a tub of Border Auriculas in the National APS Show in Kent, Washington. Cy Happy used a photograph of the most beautiful Border Auricula plants, I have yet seen (Quarterly cover, Spring 1980, Vol. 38, No. 2)¹. The container held six plants. Flowers were rich yellow with gently fluted petals and set off by white centres. The stems were strong and foliage handsome. (In his comment on the photo, Cy remarked that this display was "editor's choice" at the annual show; it was mine, too.) The yellow shade was too vibrant to fit Jimmy Long's idea No. 4 "colouring tending to pastel shades". In Pacific Northwest shows, Herb Dickson and Earl Welch

show very fine Border Auriculas that tend towards richer shades of yellow and gold. Herb has had excellent blues, some beauties that have been almost Royal blue. Is this tendency towards rich colours, rather than pastels, a Northwest phenomenon? Backtracking to Jimmy's number 2—I do not believe the Border plants I have seen have invariably had "a coat of meal" on their leaves.

Possibly one reference for Border Auriculas could be the TIME-LIFE book *Perennials*. As an example of Border type they used a colour photo of 'Denna White'. It has large, ruffled flowers and the bloom can be judged as to size by the Self Show, 'Dunder's Red' and Edged 'Snow Lady' in the same photo. So far as I can see in the photo, 'Denna White' has unmealed leaves. From the photo on the Spring 1980 cover, that yellow Auricula had mealed leaves with fine white etched margins. This suggests to me that presence of meal should be optional.

Referring to L. E. Wigley's preamble to his list of Merit and Penalty Points for Border Auriculas (Southern Section of the National Auricula Society) I would like to comment on the oft read statements by experts on "failed Show and Alpine types". While I would object to informally shaped, two-tone flowers on plants being in Border category, many of the Borders do resemble informal Selves. If they all stem from the same genetic stock, that has been said to be the Bear's-Ears crossed with *Primula hirsuta*², then they are simply variations on a theme. Similarities should, consequently, not be unexpected. Borders that look a bit



Border Auricula grown by Herb Dickson—Spring 1980

photo by Cy Happy

like Shows seem to me to be not failures, but simply different: A work horse, like a Clydesdale, isn't considered a "failed race horse".

To sum up; as the only Border Auriculas seen in Quarterly photos are usually the ones in Northwest shows, we don't know what the ones shown elsewhere look like. Growers in widely separated areas are undoubtedly sowing and selecting their plants from quite dissimilar strains of seeds. The personal tastes of major regional growers and exhibitors will play a part in establishing the 'prevailing type'. They will influence local novices and, (unless those novices are very independent people,) their style of plant will proliferate and dominate the shows. If it is possible to set up criteria after the results of Jimmy's survey are tabulated, the 'standard' should be printed in the Quarterly. It should also be well illustrated with clear photographs and supplementary line drawings of the ideal form, or forms. (drawings allow for finer details).

I am a novice at growing Auriculas so do not set myself up as any sort of authority. Enthusiasm for them and pleasure in growing them has led me to observe them in Northwest shows for about five years.

1). After the photograph of the Border Auricula appeared on the cover of the Spring 1980 Quarterly, I believe it was discovered that it had been credited to Earl Welch instead of Herb Dickson.

2). I quote Sir Rowland Biffin (Gardening Illustrated Magazine, 1940 "It may be stated briefly that as a genetical analysis of the story of colour in the Auricula shows, *Primula hirsuta* carries the compliment of genes necessary to account for all shades except pure yellow (which is brought in by *P. auricula*) and its foliage leaves have the light green colour characteristic of most green-edged forms. The calling in of another parent is not necessary." (Has another Alpine Auricula since been proved to have been involved?)

Spring Is Just Not Spring Without Primroses

by Beryl W. Orchard
Mansfield, Massachusetts

As I wander around my many varieties of *Primula*, I always have a tender touch for the very precious few *P. vulgaris* I have managed to keep alive through the New England winter.

Stirring up memories of the past, I see a little girl with a basket on her arm, walking along a leafy hedgerow lane, down a steep hill covered with bright yellow gorse, to a stream and an old water mill known as Weston Mill. There, on the slopes, she quietly fills her basket with wild flowers which seem to be growing everywhere. In the distance she can hear the happy laughter of other children playing in the stream.

This was my first introduction to — and the joy — of picking *P. vulgaris*, to me, wild primroses, and it has never left me. I was born in the West Country of England, Plymouth, in the County of Devon — hills and vales of lush green trees, red soil, and in the spring covered with an abundance of wild primroses.

Until I came to America 11 years ago, my spring began in February when I would take a ride out into the country lanes and seek out the little plants hiding underneath the hedgerow, looking for that first trace of pale lemon and I was always too early — but that was part of the joy and as soon as March arrived, the hedges would be yellow with blooms. It was fortunate for me that my parents enjoyed a ride in the country.

After the Second World War, we moved outside the town of Plymouth, into the countryside proper, to Modbury, near Bigbury-on-Sea, and during March and April, I could, and did, spend all my spare time at my favorite hobby, picking primroses. I could never get enough and in every window in every room of the house there would be vases and vases — full. I kept all my friends supplied and I loved to take huge baskets to my grandparents and in-laws who were handicapped. I had an understanding husband by now who would join in. It was good to see their eyes light up at the sight of so many blossoms and it left us with a good feeling of satisfaction when they too could give some away to their friends. It became an annual ritual and I was not alone — many others would do the same. There were days when I would collect thousands, picking only the buds so that they lasted longer in water, usually two weeks at least. Tying them in bunches (as many as could be held in the hand) and leaving them by the wayside to be collected on the way home. Groups of children, especially at Eastertime, would be taken to the country, have a picnic, and then pick primroses to take home for the church or their family. They would tie the bunches together on a long piece of string or wool and hang them from the end of a stick carried over the shoulder. I would hope that this is still a favorite pastime in Devon but I have my doubts.

Today, Weston Mill is a huge housing estate, but the countryside of Modbury and Bigbury-on-Sea is still the same. The primroses are still there, my friend tells me every Spring. She would send me a bunch if she could. When I go back to England for a visit, it will be in April and I know what I shall be doing first — picking primroses.



Elizabeth Van Sickle - Elected APS Recording Secretary

At the annual APS picnic and Board meeting, the main course of business was the selection of Elizabeth Van Sickle of Sequim, Washington as the new Recording Secretary. Elizabeth will have a tough task in filling the position being vacated by the hard working Ann Lunn. Ann's other commitments had forced her to make the difficult decision in resigning the post she had held for the past four years. Ann Lunn will be sorely missed by the Board of Directors.

Elizabeth, an ardent gardener and primula enthusiast, was welcomed on board and given the full support of the members in her new and demanding challenge.



Elizabeth Van Sickle - newly appointed APS Recording Secretary

photo by L. Bailey



From the mailbox

There is an article in the Royal Horticultural Society's magazine about Elworm which, I believe was the reason you had difficulty in getting your plants into America. I'll duplicate it when I've time to go up to the local library where there is a duplicating machine—it might interest you.

I've got some very vigorous looking seedlings ready to flower. The few that have bloomed, have had small faults which may be better or worse when they flower properly in the spring. The stamens are rather small but in the right place, the inner ring slightly wavy, but overall a good circle. I expect they'll look very plain if they ever get onto a show bench, but meanwhile, they give me pleasure.

Margery Thompson, 4 Eastlands Crescent, Dulwich, London SE21, England

All my primrose seeds are doing well, I am going to have a lot of plants next year. Have been trying hard to keep them correctly labeled and I think I am succeeding. Occasionally, a squirrel will pull out a label thinking it is good to eat, but I usually manage to find it. I have a lot of transplanting to do and soon. I tried the method described by Irene Ebert in the last Quarterly, I even wrote to her direct for further instructions; I started the seeds the same as Begonias except a little cooler and the results were fantastic!

Over here, on this eastern side of America we have had an overdose of rain this summer; the flowers do not like it, but what is worse—we are having a heavy dose of 'acid rain'. It will be interesting to hear people's comments from around the country regarding this new kind of pollution.

Beryl W. Orchard, 3 Darby Drive, Mansfield, MA 02048

I grow a lot of Primulas (counting Florists Auriculas). My favourite is always the one in flower at the moment, and today I've been treated to a feast of *P. Allionii*, *Allionii* hybrids and pubescent hybrids. I have shown my own seedling *Allionii* called "Elizabeth". I was informed there was an "Elizabeth Eagle", so mine is now "Elizabeth Baker". It didn't win! What did win this past spring was a *Primula vulgaris Sibthorpii* I dug up in the rain the night before, removed a slug or two and pulled off some old dead leaves—I only put it in for a bit of colour. Isn't it always the way—the one you sweated blood over doesn't do a thing, and the one you neglect hits the jackpot.

One of my specialties is *Primula Ellisiae*. I planted nine seeds some years ago and five came up. I gave one away—unflowered and the best of the bunch. That taught me a lesson—I lost 3 to vine weevil one winter, and that left one. It's a sort of pinky-red-magenta and two of the others were lavender with little purple 'fingerprints', fairy fingerprints at the base of the petals. I've wanted to know what is the difference—other than colour—between

Ellisiae and *Rusbyi*. I've seen both, I've grown both and I got both out of the same batch of seed. Now I've grown some more, seed saved from my own big plant (now in a 10" pot) crossed with the biggest, oldest plant in Britain, over 20 years old and was in a 16" pot. And again I've got pink-magenta ones and lavender ones with fairy fingerprints. Is it a hybrid? Are there known hybrids between *P. Ellisiae* and *P. Rusbyi*? You ought to know, it grows in your territory. And incidentally, do they cross with *P. Parryi*? If my Parryi flower this year I'll have a go and let you know.

In my first copy (or so) of "Primroses", there was an article on genes and I learnt that wine-purple x wine-purple = black, for polyanthus. I wondered if the cross would work for auriculas, because they are all Primulas. Well it does. I've got two black seedlings—centers were not very good but the color was what I wanted. I will try it on my doubles next. Do you know what colors (genes) to cross for a scarlet? Dark red and yellow I should think. I'll work on it.

P.S. Did you know there's a *Primula Ellisiae alba* now. I know three people with it and now I want it! Aren't we humans acquisitive?

Gwen Baker, 15 Ackleton Gardens, Bradmore, Wolverhampton WV3 7ES, England

On behalf of the Oregon Primrose Society, I want to thank all members who helped with the American Primrose Society's, National Show which was held in Milwaukie, Oregon, this past spring.

It was disappointing that more members up North, were not able to attend or enter Primulas, but we did have an interesting and successful show.

A special "thank you" to Cheryl Genheimer; Cheryl made the schedule and place cards for the banquet, which made it a more festive occasion. Cheryl does much behind the scenes all through the year, and her work is appreciated by all.

Dorothy Macfarlane made the arrangement for the head table at the banquet and the beautiful Primula corsage for our honored guest, Mary Zach. Dorothy also painted the Mt. Hood background for the beautiful garden assembled for the show. She makes a special garden for the show each year. This setting always attracts attention. The Oregon Primrose Society appreciates her time and talents and owes her a debt of gratitude.

Thelma Genheimer, her family and the many friends from the Valley-Hi Primrose Society who came from Beaverton to lend a hand; thank you.

My personal acknowledgement to Margaret Mason and Thelma Genheimer for the thoughts and kind words which appeared in the Spring Quarterly in tribute to my husband, William.

Etha Tate, President, Oregon Primrose Society

I wonder whether you would be interested in reproducing the enclosed photograph. It was taken by John Barlow at the 1982 London Show. The plant is "Singer Stripe". As his excellent portrayal makes only too clear, there still persists the tendency for the stripes to project beyond the circle of the petals, giving a ragged effect. In one or two of the later varieties, this fault has been largely eliminated.



'Ormonde Stripe' by A. Hawkes
photo by A. Hawkes



'Macbeth Stripe'—seedling by A. Hawkes
photo by L. Bailey



Striped Auricula 'Singer Stripe' raised by Allan Hawkes photo by J. M. Barlow

It does seem as if stripes are destined to always be uncommon plants as they tend to form themselves onto large multi-headed plants, rather than going about the preferred business of making offsets. I suspect that even in their heyday they were never numerous and this may be partly the reason. They are odd, too, in that they usually bloom noticeably earlier than the Edged Auriculas to which they are presumably akin botanically.

Allan Hawkes, Rabley Heath, Hertfordshire, England

I had to laugh, then cry recently. I went to our local nursery, closest to home, to ask them if 'this' year maybe they had plans to expand their primula offerings by ordering plants and seeds of *P. denticulata* and *P. japonica*. The reply was a brisk "no"! The reason, they went on to say, was "people in Eureka don't even know what denticulatas and japonicas are and I'm not sure if they'd sell. Besides, we've got enough variety anyway—we carry four kinds." Can you believe that? A whole "four kinds" of primroses, and that's enough!

Oh, how accurate you were about the "North Coast" of California. When God was finished here, he threw away the plans. We who live here consider ourselves most fortunate. How blessed we are with these gorgeously huge Redwoods, with their feathery arms stretched out to protect the armies of ferns and wild flowers that inhabit the forest floor. In the spring, trilliums stretch towards the sun and cap off their foliage with beautiful white and pink flowers. Then come the orange lilies with their drooping heads as if giving reverence to the creator Himself. Wild Iris blanket the forest floor, and along with many other wild flowers, the native rhodies seemingly expose their beautiful pink flowers as if not to be outdone. Then, upon fading, they quietly blend back into the landscape, leaving the admirer guessing where they'll reappear next year. With our climate being so constant all Spring, Summer, and Fall, coupled with the perpetual fog, the area is like a huge greenhouse protecting its inhabitants. We can grow anything and everything here, except those plants that require marked seasons or high summer temperatures. What a tremendous place to grow Primula!

Having an agricultural background (being raised on a 100 acre berry farm near Portland), one would think that successful horticulture would come easy for me. Not so; as a matter of fact. I've been gardening only the last three years. When I left the farm, I vowed never to touch the soil again—20 years was enough! But, when we bought our first home, and I got involved in the landscaping, it was as if something snapped (my back at first) and my appetite for plants and gardening became almost ravenous. It was as if my soul had determined that 10 years of clean fingernails and unsoiled hands had been too long a time to be absent from my origins, and that this lost time must be "made up" immediately. So head over heels I have tumbled, becoming poorer in the pocketbook but rich as a king in spirit and self satisfaction.

Since part of my yard is heavily shaded and influenced by Redwoods, I became extremely interested in those plants that thrive in the darker parts of Mother Nature's home. As time progressed, my interest expanded from fuchsias, rhodies, ferns and hostas into the vast world of primroses, and even eastern wildflowers. But next to ferns (my collection consists of about

300 species and varieties) my heart belongs to these quaint little flowers that bring our communications together.

Since I still consider myself a "rookie" (as lost plants verify), I have found numerous Primula species somewhat of a real trick to grow. Naturally, those that require alpine house conditions, or snowfall protection from winter rains, were the first to go to "Primula Heaven". Even some that I couldn't seem to provide the necessary sharp drainage for, have survived but not bloomed. So more experimenting is needed. I'll move them next spring to get a little more sun. But, those that have grown and bloomed for me are: *P. chionantha*, *cockburniana*, *alpicola*, *Abschatica*, *darialica*, *denticulata*, numerous *elatior*, *florindae*, *frondosa*, *involucrata*, copious julies, *kisoana*, *japonica*, *marginata*, *modesta*, *minima*, *pulverulenta*, *rosea*, *sikkimensis*, *veris*, and of course, my Barnhaven polyanthus, julies and Gold Lace. Also, numerous border auriculas and a couple of Show-edged in pots have done pretty good.

As time goes on, I plan to continue and expand my collection, but I'm going to do more prep work in order to give some of these little "beasties" the exact conditions they need.

Greg Becker, P.O. Box 3723, Eureka, CA 95501

We are the old original (National Auricula and Primula Society-Northern Section), our Society being the first to be devoted on a national scale to the primula family. It was founded 110 years ago. Shortly afterwards, a group of growers in the south of England formed their own Section. There is now also another Section in the Midlands. Each of the Sections is autonomous and looks after all aspects of its own affairs. We in the north have the advantage of a cool, moist climate over our compatriots in the south and many of the primula clan thrive better here than elsewhere, though this does not diminish either the growers or the plants of the south. Our membership has shown a constant tendency to increase and now stands at around the 350 mark. We hold two shows per year, a Primula Show in April and the Auricula Show on the first Saturday in May. Each year we publish a Year Book, consisting of 64 pages: we have also recently published a booklet on the cultivation of the Exhibition types of the Auricula and the Gold-Laced Polyanthus. My post as Editor is open to annual election, though since I became the incumbent three years ago, there has been no other nominee—a comment, one supposes, on the fact that I have a typewriter and not enough common sense to keep out of sight at the Annual General Meeting. The task is, as you have doubtlessly discovered, tiring, bothersome, arduous and satisfying. I think that Cy Happy did a good job in retaining his post for so long and I only hope that I can maintain interest for that length of time.

I first received "Primroses" just over a year ago and I had a letter published in one edition. The subject of that letter was twofold, one part being my interest in the Gold-Lace Polyanthus. I have a feeling from reading Glenny that the plants of that gentleman's day were not so proliferous with offsets as ours, thus lending themselves with greater facility to the single-crown method of presentation. Quite fortuitously, I discovered a seedling which showed a tendency towards this trait and a cross was made with a plant with a beautiful dark ground and refined lacing, both possessing a

clear, yellow eye. If all goes well, the seedlings from that cross will bloom in just a few weeks. They have, as hoped, thrown few side growths, while one plant from a similar cross which bloomed in autumn was of admirable form. Since we all know the capricious nature of the primula family in its ability to produce the loveliest blooms on their first appearance and then revert to something quite horrendous on their next bloom, I cannot yet claim to have established a worthwhile personal strain: I continue to hope.

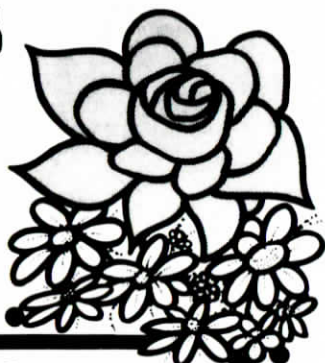
It is not clear from the pictures in your publications what method of presentation North American growers prefer or what are the standards by which the plants are judged. Do you have a clearly defined policy on this? Our Northern Section re-instituted such a code of properties about four years ago, since it would not be logical to have an objective set of standards for Show and Alpine Auriculas and none for the GLP. While one hears criticism of such standards from outsiders, one can only wonder whether it is entirely coincidental that the central part of one of the rose windows in the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris has just the 1-3-6 proportions advocated as a counsel of perfection by Maddock just a few years before Glenny. The growing of the plants on a single crown and the judging of only one truss of bloom on a plant has led to difficulties in cultivation. The most intractable one is how to keep the plant to the one crown without diminishing either the vigour of the whole plant or the size of the pips. The biggest pips are still to be seen on plants in five inch pots which look as though they have just emerged from a tropical forest, while the most refined pips are found on small plants which give rise to fears as to their continued existence in this world. Any thoughts either from you or from the growers in North America?

One aspect of the American Society which I admire is its devotion to improving garden polyanthus and primroses. Some of the most beautiful strains available here come from Barnhaven, of American origin. Many of these possess a neat eye—not necessarily the diminutive one of the Cowichan strain but one which is pleasantly proportioned. At the moment we have no set standards for the judging of these plants, much depending on their freshness, colour and neat presentation. How are these plants judged with you? They are capable of much improvement and yet the commercial seed houses seem to be heading towards the great mopheads resulting from the interbreeding of the *P. vulgaris* primrose and the Pacific Giant polyanthus strain or towards the juliana type. I have had nothing which could be admired for its colour and form or which would withstand the rigors of our cold, clammy winter or my indifferent cultivation.

My main interest, however, is the Show Auricula, still without a doubt the aristocrat of the tribe. They continue to be as self-willed as ever and refuse to comply with the grower's wishes, and yet what can match their superb, cool composure and form? Early attempts at hybridizing have met with no success whatsoever, but such is their attraction that I hope to attempt once more this spring to conjure something worthwhile from the recalcitrant genes. Others in this field are beginning to produce new plants which the growers of old would have given their right arm to own. With the advent of meristem propagation techniques, let us hope that it will not be too long before many of them are widely distributed.

Allan Guest, 3 Church Walk, Euxton, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 6HL, England

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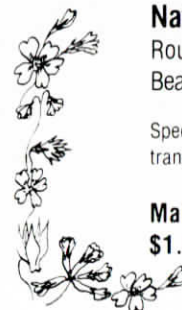


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Did you remember?

The Winter Quarterly will contain the Resource Directory of members, societies, nurseries and seed houses dealing in primula show schedules, etc.

Members are urged to send in this information and locations for their 'special' resources to the Editor's Committee right now before they forget.

