

Primroses



Vol. 44

Spring 1986

No. 2

Entered 2nd Class, Bryn Mawr, Pa.



Variagated double acaulis, unnamed, raised by Rosetta Jones.

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President's Message

Dear Fellow Members,

By the time this message reaches you most of the 1986 Primrose Shows will either be in progress or finished. I certainly hope all the Chapters have great success with their shows, sales and with their membership drives.

At the National Show we have the annual banquet and election of APS Officers and Board Members taking place each year during April. Considering the number of members the APS has on its roster not many take an active part in business matters or in voting. Perhaps this would be a good thing to work on in 1986.

There has been a date change for the annual APS Picnic. This year it will be held the **third** Saturday in July - July 19th, 1986. It will be at the same place as the past few years: Herb Dickson's Chehalis Rare Plant Nursery, 2568 Jackson Hwy., Chehalis, Washington. The picnic is a friendly potluck affair. Bring your favorite dish and your own place setting. Potluck begins at noon with a plant auction to follow. Auction plants are donated by any members wishing to do so, with all proceeds going to the APS. Some fine plants have turned up at these auctions, and the auction itself provides a good deal of fun for all. This picnic is also a good way to meet other APS members, "talk plants" with them, and tour Herb's nursery with knowledgeable plant people who can help supply information about the different primula hybrids and species and other plants available at the nursery. The different plants are numbered by the thousands here. Come, bring your families and friends and enjoy.

There has been a lack of news from various Chapters as well as from individuals making up the organization. Chapter elections and new officers need to be reported, as well as more detail on flower shows: Number of entries, description of winning plants, along with the name of winning grower and the name or description of trophies won. Photos are of course much appreciated. Send your information to the Editor as soon after events as possible. A copy sent to the President would also be very welcome. The more communication the better.

Yours truly,

Albert Ross Smith

What's New?

Edited by Joe Dupre
Anacortes, WA

Item:

WOOLITE™ AS AN "ALTERNATIVE ALTERNATIVE" TO SAFER'S

And here we thought Safer's Insecticidal Soap was an alternative to scary pesticides! Well, Celia Chastain, of the Somerville Herb Company in Tennessee, avoids Safer's because of its phosphate content (not "organic", says Mrs. Chastain), substituting Woolite (not just for sweaters, it seems!) diluted 1-to-10 or 5-to-10 with (presumably just) water for control of spider mites and aphids. Two applications of Woolite are needed for heavy infestations.

Reference: C. Chastain, "Back Talk", The Business of Herbs 3(2), May/June 1985, 18. (P.O. Box 559, Madison, VA 22727.)

Your editor has read the item on Safer's from several sources. Work done by USC/Davis indicates that nearly any liquid soap, detergent or bar soap works – some well, some not. Dissolved laundry powder or whipped up soap bars are **NOT** so good. Researchers at Davis found the largest variable to be the oil used in manufacturing. Since this is not a constant ingredient, but varies from time to time according to price, you will have to test run yours. Put your material (preferably a liquid product) on a section (leaf) of a plant, then wait. If it works well for you check the lot number on the label and stock up. A different lot number may contain a different oil, with different (possibly disastrous) results.

Item:

GROWTH INHIBITORS IN LETTUCE SEEDS (AND OTHER SEEDS, TOO?)

Research at the University of Arizona Department of Plant Sciences has revealed the presence of chemical growth inhibitors in lettuce seeds. These inhibitors apparently are released into the growing medium when the seeds germinate, and they can slow the growth of the seedlings if present in high enough concentrations. The inhibitors are water soluble, and so can be diluted and/or washed away from the seedlings if the water content of the growing medium is maintained at a fairly high level. But an easier way to speed the growth of lettuce seedlings is to add activated charcoal to the growing medium. The Arizona researcher found that adding 2.5% activated charcoal (by weight) to vermiculite or soil greatly increased the rate of lettuce seed germination at low moisture levels. The activated charcoal absorbs the inhibitors.

The research suggests that germination of coated lettuce seeds might be speeded by incorporating activated charcoal in the coating material. Coated seeds of other species might also benefit from charcoal; the possibility that growth inhibitors are found in many kinds of seeds has not yet been adequately investigated. For now, we can suggest that if you've been having germination troubles with certain seeds, try mixing a little activated charcoal into the growing medium. (Acti-

vated charcoal is available in many local garden supply stores.)

Reference: G. C. Sharples, "Interaction of Moisture Potential and Activated Carbon on Lettuce Seed Germination", Journal of the American Society for Horticultural Science 103, 1978, 135-137.

Some authorities claim that there is a germination inhibitor in the seed coat of at least **some** primula seed. It's at least worth a try. Activated charcoal is also sold at pet shops; and for use in aquarium filters. It's not expensive. Now here's another interesting additive.

Item:

GINSENG ROOT POWDER AS A PLANT GROWTH PROMOTER

In tissue culture experiments to produce African violet plants from leaf and petiole tissue, a researcher in Hong Kong added ginseng root powder to the culture medium, and found that the quality and quantity of regenerated plantlets were thereby increased. No word yet on the possible mechanisms for ginseng's beneficial action.

We think it would be worthwhile (and fun!) to try adding ginseng root powder to the growing media of various plants to see whether there are noticeable effects. Let us know if you try it!

Reference: Abstract 7027, Horticultural Abstracts 55(9), September 1985, 720. (Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, Farnham Royal, Slough SL2 3BN, UNITED KINGDOM.)

Ginseng powder can be bought at most health food stores.

Bill Smith of USC and APS plays around with gibberellic acid on both seed and growing plants "with good results" (his words). His methods are the simplest. He mixes a little of the powder in water and tries it. If it works he increases the strength of the solution until no further improvement ensues.

If his initial attempts are less than satisfactory, he simply dilutes the mix.

Item:

WATER-HOLDING GELS: DETRIMENTAL TO BLUEBERRIES

Hydrolyzed starch-polyacrylonitrile graft copolymers originally developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture are marketed (sometimes in modified forms) as water-holding gels to protect plants, especially after transplanting, from excessive water stress. Product names include Super Slurper™, Terra-Sorb™, Viterra™, Perma-Sorb™, Aqua-Gel™, and several others. These gels absorb water and (at least theoretically) release it to plant roots as the soil dries out.

Investigations at the U.S.D.A. Small Fruit Research Station, Poplarville, Mississippi, using Aqua-Gel in establishing native blueberry plants, showed that dipping the plant roots in the gel solution, with or without peat added to the planting holes, resulted in significantly increased death during the first growing season, compared to controls without gel treatment. The experiments were motivated by a desire to replace peat as an amendment with gel, to save money – but the outcome argues strongly against the use of gel for blueberry treatment, with or without peat.

Previous experiments have shown that gel products can be beneficial in reducing water stress of potted flowers, bedding plants, Christmas trees, and woody ornamentals. Why might gels be detrimental to blueberries? The pH of the gel solution is quite high (alkaline) – much higher than recommended for soil appropriate to growing blueberries. The high pH could cause the blueberry roots (and, perhaps, the roots of other acid-loving plants!) to take up toxic elements. Or the gel might prevent the

roots from properly contacting organic material in the soil – an important requirement for good blueberry growth. Also, some scientists have theorized that gels accumulate salts as they age, and blueberry seedlings are sensitive to salt concentrations. But whatever the correct explanation(s), it appears important to avoid water-holding gels when transplanting blueberries.

Reference: C.L. Gupton, "Establishment of Native Vaccinium Species on a Mineral Soil", HortScience 20(4), August 1985, 673-674. (American Society for Horticultural Science, 701 N. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria, VA 22314.)

In a back issue of the Quarterly, Cy Happy reported on his trials with a water-holding gel. You might want to check with him on his results; pH and possible salt accumulation seem to be the problems here. They might affect some primula species.

Item:

BLOOM SEQUENCE LISTING FOR PERENNIALS, BIENNIALS, BULBS

The perfect guide to help you plan for continuous bloom from early spring until fall is "Sequence of Bloom of Perennials, Biennials, and Bulbs", by R. G. Mower and R. E. Lee, Cornell University Cooperative Extension Information Bulletin 196. This Bulletin lists plants alphabetically by scientific name (common names are also given), and it includes information on approximate heights and flower colors. Available for \$2 postpaid from Distribution Center, 7 Reserach Park, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14850.)

Thanks to Lewis Ward for the information!

I got this book – it's absolutely SUPER!

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Double Primrose Culture Described

By Florence Bellis

GARDENS

2*****OREGON JOURNAL, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1941

High on the fertile slopes of Syria's Lebanon mountains, the crimson primrose is blooming warmed into flower by the same southerly winds that helped Cleopatra's flower-laden ships reach the Island of Crete. Flourishing from Istanbul down through the Taurus mountains of Turkey and into Syria, this primrose is typically Byzantine in color.

Several hundred years ago visiting Englishmen found this vivid jewel-like primrose blooming in shades of purple and crimson and carried a collection

home with them. At ease and happy in their new surroundings, hybridists began to experiment with them and these wildlings from the heights of Islam became one of the parents of today's colored primroses.

And then hybridists began to dream of a blue primrose and they worked patiently and long until Mr. Wilson of Wisley, England, was able to exhibit a few plants in 1889 that could be called blue.

He had taken a purple primrose with a color inclining to violet and with rare skill almost eliminated the red tone. There still remained a crimson rim around the gold star, but since that time, even this has been bred out and today we have primroses as deeply blue as the Mediterranean.

Fine double acaulis raised by Van Dirk. Judged best in show. Color is a deep lavender, almost purple.



The tendency of blue primroses to flower through the winter is undoubtedly due to its originating in the highlands of Asia Minor where most of the land lies at least a mile above sea level.

Double Lavender

In a spirit of whimsy, no doubt, this same primrose is responsible for another of our favorites, the double-flowering lavender one. How or why these double forms appear remains a mystery and since nature does not reproduce oddities of this sort from seed, all of the plants now in existence have been produced by division. This accounts for their comparative scarcity.

Almost everyone has seen this double primrose with the lovely rosette of lavender showering up like a fountain from the crown of the plant.

The enthusiasm with which it blooms is apt to devitalize the plant, and picking some of the blossoms at the peak of the season is advisable to relieve the strain. They are exquisite in small bowls and corsages.

One English authority suggests that they be planted in stiff, well drained ground under the gooseberry bushes, but here they grow and multiply in the same deep loam and partial shade that the singles like. On the coast, too, they grow luxuriantly in a sandy, loose soil. These doubles like plenty of barnyard manure put around them (not touching the plant, of course) in the fall so that when blooming begins the rains will

have washed the fertilizer down to the roots supplying the necessary nourishment during their excessive activity.

Protection Needed

They are better for being planted near some protecting shrub or rock to deflect the force of a pelting rain. Perhaps this is the reason for the gooseberry suggestion. Divide them after blooming when the clump becomes too large and keep moist during the summer.

There is a pure white form from the double lavender that is very beautiful.

Although double primroses do not seed, there is a way of making single primroses produce double flowers. And since a gardener's stock of patience grows in proportion of his gardening, when he has labored long enough he will probably feel the urge to travel the following long road in and endeavor to create a new double primrose.

Brush the ripe pollen from a double primrose over the stigma of a single primrose when receptive. Watch the seed carefully and when ripe, gather and sow. When these plants bloom, again brush the stigma of these blossoms with pollen of the double. Sow the seed and repeat the process the third time.

If you are a lucky gardener you may have a new double primrose the third generation. If you do not, continue to breed in the double blood and eventually you will have created a new double variety. Nothing remains then but the naming.

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"*Primula sieboldii* E. Moren", a book about *P. sieboldii* by Mr. T. Torii, full of magnificent, superb and clear photos throughout; illustrating 205 varieties, both old and new, of *P. sieboldii* together with some major wild *Primulas* native to Japan, featuring lots of varieties raised from 18th century to date, its history, character and cultivation. English names attached to color plates, 285mm x 215mm, 151pp., hardcover. Japanese Y6,700 or US\$42 incl. p/p. Checks and money orders should be made payable to **ALBIFLORA**, Inc. We are the **ONLY ONE** in Japan who offer you any books and magazines related to gardening and plants of Japan. Enclose 2 Int'l Reply Coupons per inquiry. **ALBIFLORA**, Inc., P.O. Box 24, Gyotoku, Ichikawa, Chiba, 272-01 JAPAN.

First International Photo Primula Show

In the next (Summer, '86) issue of PRIMROSES full details of a photo flower show, approved by the Board of Directors, and featuring generous cash prizes in numerous classes, as well as a big bonus for "BEST IN SHOW," will appear. If you photograph your primulas, either in color or black-and-white, either potted or in the garden, you will want to take advantage of this opportunity to win real prizes, and to show the results of your labors to primula growers everywhere. There will be no entry fees. All winners will appear in the Quarterly, some hopefully in color.

So, during this growing season, take lots of pictures of your species and hybrids for submission in the summer PHOTO SHOW. Entries will be judged by a panel of certified "experts." Let's all get together and make this 'first time' international show a big success by submitting entries in many classes. To give you an idea of what to shoot, here is a 'preview' of the rules that will govern all entries:

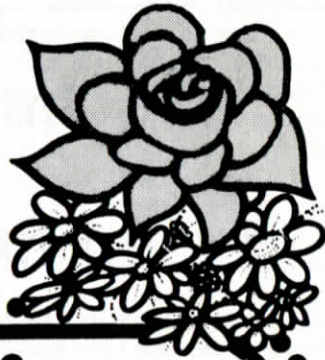
(a) 5 x 7 or 8 x 10 glossy black-and-white prints (unless otherwise noted), as many entries as desired, may be submitted by anyone, member or not, in any or all of the classes to be listed. Photos may be garden or potted subjects. Plant need not be in bloom, though in most cases that would be expected.

(b) Each class will be judged separately and prizes awarded as indicated in the Schedule. Decision of the judges is final.

(c) To be eligible for a prize, the print must become the property of the Quarterly, with full rights to publish at the discretion of the Editor. Winning photographs will, of course, appear in an article reporting the Show.

(d) On the back of each photo must appear as many of the following as are appropriate: Division and Class, correct Latin name of the subject (plus common name if appropriate), name and address of the grower, name and address of photographer (if different), description of the plant (history or story of it), parentage of crosses or hybrids, and so on.

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Primroses of Japan

by Yoshiharu Matsumura

Mr. Matsumura is a botanist, specializing in taxonomy. He did graduate work at Colorado A. & M. College, Fort Collins, Colorado. Shortly after his return to Japan, his work *The True Aquatic Vascular Plants of Colorado* was published as technical bulletin No. 57 by the College.

(This article originally appeared in the *Summer, 1957 Quarterly* and is reprinted, with new pictures, for your information and enjoyment.)

Primrose lovers in Japan have been growing them for many decades and have learned to grow them very well. There are two Primrose Societies in Japan at the present time, one in Kanto district (Chiba prefecture) and the other in Kansai (Kyoto prefecture). However, most of them are concentrating on *Primula Sieboldii* and its many variations. Dr. Owhi describes fourteen species of Primroses native to Japan in his splendid work "Flora of Japan," 1956, and he added a few varieties in some species.

Geographically, the Primroses of Japan are found mostly in the north, with only a few native to the southern islands of Shikoku and Kyushu. *P. Sieboldii* is the only one found at sea level and low altitudes, all the rest growing by mountain streams and lakes in peaty soil or in sub-alpine scree, with the exception of a few found in the mountain forests.

The writer would like to describe each of the species taxonomically and add a few ecological remarks. He wishes to express his appreciation to the authors of many books of reference.

EXPLANATION OF EACH SPECIES

P. japonica A. Gray.

Japanese name: Kurinso, means *nine storied whorl primrose*.

Probably the tallest of all the genus. Bloom pink or whitish pink in the wild, whereas cultivated ones are white and

white with red margin, etc.

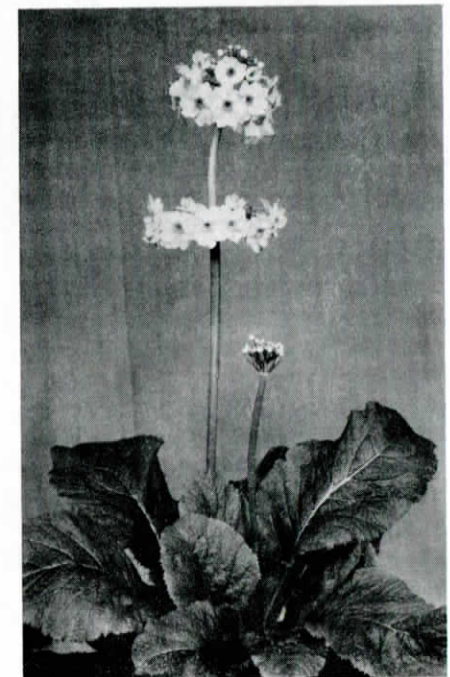
Flower: June to July.

Locality: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku.

Habitat: Swamp or wet slope of valley, pond or lake side of mountains of temperate zone up to the subalpine zone.

Distribution: Japan, Taiwan (Formosa).

Cultivation: Easy if planted in the same habitat as of the wild, using sandy peat soil with good drainage. Propagation is by dividing and seeding. In the landscape garden, plant at the side of a small ditch



or shallow pond and *P. japonica* will do well in either full sun or part shade.

Appearance of plant is unique because of the inflorescence which has many storied Whorls. Plant glabrous; leaves membranaceous, large spatulate form, has an irregular acute dentate margin, round or very obtuse at the top and gradually cuneate winged to the petiole

which is very short, 15-40 cm. long; flower stalk 20-60 cm. long, inflorescence has 3-7 storied whorls; calyx is bell shape, sepal wide triangular and acute, yellow powder inside; corolla 2-3 cm. in diameter, pink or whitish pink in the wild, whereas cultivated ones are white with red margin, etc., petal obcordate at the top.



P. cuneifolia var. *fauriei*. Photo by Kazuo Mori.

P. cuneifolia Ledeb.

– *cuneifolia* var. *Dubyi* Pax.

Japanese name: Ezo-kozakura, means small Primrose grow in Hokkaido (Ezo).

Widely cultivated by many Primrose lovers. Bloom is pink or whitish pink, throat yellow. White is found but rarely.

Flower: July to August.

Locality: Alpine zone of Hokkaido (all through the Province).

Habitat: Wet slope of alpine zone about 7,600 feet above sea level.

Distribution: Saghalien, Kuriles, Okhotsk, the Aleutians, Alaska.

Variety and forma:

var. *hakusanensis* (Fr.) Makino

– *P. hakusanensis* Fr.

– *P. cuneifolia* auct. *hondo* vix Ledeb.

– *P. cuneifolia* var. *tanigawaensis* Tatew.

Japanese name: Hakusan-kozakura, means small primrose ordinarily found on Mt. Hakusan.

The variety has longer leaves which are more dentate, has longer pedicels than the species and has more flowers.

forma *albiflora* Tatewaki is found rarely on Mt. Kurodake in the Daisetsu Mountain range mixed with the common ones.

Widely cultivated by many primrose

lovers or amateurs. Glabrous perennial herb; leaf smooth succulent, obovate at the top and cuneate at the base gradually winged and united to the petiole, few dentate roughly at the margin on the upper half, 1-5 cm. long; 1-2 cm. wide; flower stalk 14 cm. high, 1-6 or 9 flowers in umbel, flower 1.5-2 cm. in diameter, and the color is pink or whitish pink, throat yellow. Rarely white one exists.

P. nipponica Yatabe

Japanese name: Hina-zakura, means Princess like delicate Primrose.

Good for alpine flower grower. Flowers are white, funnel shaped with yellow throat.

Flower: July to August.

Locality: Northern half of Tohoku district of Honshu.

Habitat: Grouped in the swamp or wet slope of alpine zone.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Somewhat succulent glabrous leaves, spatulate, bushy growing, 3-5 cm. long, simple dentate at the upper half, base cuneate winged to the petiole; flower stalk 5-12 cm. high, glabrous, 2 to several flowers in umbel, corolla white, funnel shape, throat yellow.

P. macrocarpa Maxim

– *farinosa* var. *mistassinica* Makino non Pax.

– *hayachinci* Petitm.

Japanese name: Hime-kozakura, means Princess like small Primrose.

Rare charming smallest perennial herb, widely cultivated. Bloom white with yellow throat.

Flower: June.

Locality: Mt. Hayachine, north of Honshu.

Habitat: Grassland of alpine zone with moderate moisture.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Leaves glabrous round somewhat rhombic base suddenly cuneate narrowly winged to the petiole, irregular acute dentate at the margin, blade 7-15 mm. long, more or less 3 cm. long to include

petiole and 5-10 mm. wide, light green on the lower surface; flower 1-4 on a stalk which is 5-10 cm. high, pedicel 7-20 mm long, corolla white 10 mm. in diameter, throat yellow, calyx tube 4-6 cm. long, 5-lobes; capsule cylindrical 6-8 mm. long.

P. modesta Bisset et Moore.

– *farinosa* L. var. *luteo-farinosa*, forma *japonica* Fr. et Sav.

– *farinosa* L. var. *modesta* (Bisset et Moore) Makino.

– *modesta* ar. *shikoku-montana* Miyabe et Tatewaki.

Japanese name: Yukiwari-so, means Primrose comes up out of snow.

Small perennial herb with compact yellow powder on the under side of the leaves. Blooms are whitish purple, purple or blue, rarely white.



P. modesta var. *fauriae* alba. Photo by Ray Elliott.

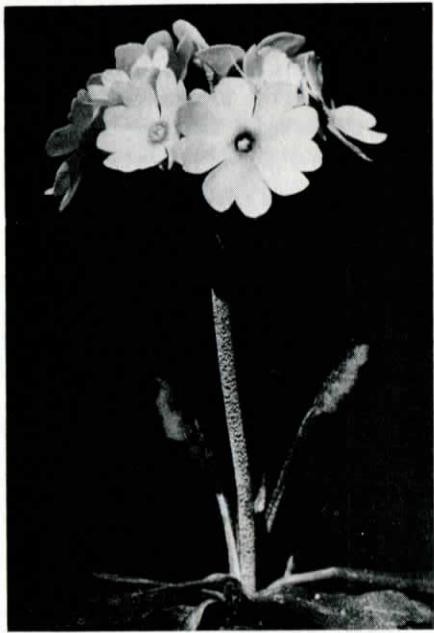
Flower: May to June.

Locality: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu.

Habitat: Grows and blooms in rocky thaw places on the mountain of alpine and subalpine zone.

Distribution: Saghalien, the Kuriles, Korea, and Japan.

Cultivation: Pot culture using sandy peat soil.



P. modesta var. *Faurieae*

Leaf broad oblanceolate or cuneate, winged down to the long petiole sometimes keeping the old leaves to the next year, dentate at the margin, 3 to 10 cm. long, 1-1.5 cm. width, with compactly yellow powder on the lower surface; flower stalk about 12 cm. long, about 10 flowers in umbel, calyx bell shape, sepal oblong elliptic, corolla 15 mm. in diameter, whitish purple, purple or blue, rarely white; capsule short cylindrical 5-8 mm. long.

Varieties:

- (a) var. *Faurieae* (Fr.) Takeda
- *P. Faurieae* Fr.
- *P. farinosa* var. *Faurieae* (Fr.) Miyabe
- *P. Faurieae* var. *sanimontana* Tatew.
- *P. modesta* var. *sanimontana* (Tatew.) Nakai

Japanese name: Yukiwari-kozakura, means *small Primrose comes out of snow*.

Grows in northern Honshu, Hokkaido and the Kuriles. Flowers in

June to July. Rarely white one which is called f. *leucantha* Hara.

Leaf broad ovate, base sharply cuneate and winged to the petiole.

- (b) var. *Matsumurae* (Petitm.) Nakai.
- *P. Matsumurae* Petitm.

Japanese name: Reibun-kozakura, means *native to Reibun Island*.

Plants grow somewhat thickly, flowers numerous, found in Reibun Island and Province Teshio of Hokkaido.

Leaf oblanceolate, gradually winged to the petiole.

P. yuparensis Takeda

Japanese name: Yubari-kozakura, means *grow on Mt. Yubari*.

Very rare, closely resembling *P. modesta*, but powder is whitish, not yellow. Blooms whitish pink purple.

Flower: July to August.

Locality: Mt. Yubari, Hokkaido.

Habitat: Alpine zone where the underground water is plentiful and soil is gravelly.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Leaves several, broad lanceolate or somewhat spatulate, cuneate 1.5-3 cm. long, 1-1.5 cm. wide, obtuse at the top and denticulate diversely; flower stalk 4-6 cm., flower 2-3 apically, calyx 7 mm. long, slightly powdered, corolla whitish pink purple, 1.5 cm. in diameter, tube twice as long as calyx.

P. sorachiana Miyabe et Tatewaki

Japanese name: Sorachi-kozakura, means *named on Province Sorachi*.

Glabrous small perennial herb that blooms with a purplish red flower.

Flower: May

Locality: Kanayama, Province Ishikari, Hokkaido.

Habitat: ?

Distribution: Japan

Leaf 1-2 cm. long, 5-10 mm. wide, elliptic spatulate or rhombic spatulate, apex obtuse or round, dentate only at the upper part, powder white on lower surface, petiole winged and same length

of blade; flower stalk 3-4 cm. high, flower more or less 10, apically with slightly white powder, corolla purplish red, 10-13 mm. in diameter, tube twice as long as calyx which is 4-5 mm. long; sepal acute

linear lanceolate. Capsule same length as calyx.

P. Sieboldii E. Morr

- *cortusoides* auct. japon. non Linn.
- *patens* Tyrez, (nom) ex Trautv.

P. Sieboldii 'Southern Cross'.
Photo by A. Monner.



- *cortusoides* var. *patens* Turcz.
- *cortusoides Sieboldii* (E. Morr) Nicholson
- *gracillis* Stein

Japanese name: Sakuraso, means *cherry (sakura)-like-herb (so)*

Most popular Japanese Primrose which has been cultivated and improved by many Primrose lovers for a long time. The history of cultivation has been traced to old literature called KADAN KOMOKU, 1681, in Japan. According to the horticultural Encyclopedia of Japan, it has now more than 570 horticultural varieties on account of its color, shape, size, number, etc., of flowers and form of margin, shape and number of petals, etc. The national monument was founded for this at Tashimano-hara and Mimiyamura of Saitama prefecture in 1932.

Flowers are whitish pink or white or

reddish purple with many intermediate forms. The whole plant is covered with whitish multicellular pilous hairs.

Flower: April to May.

Locality: Southern part of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu.

Habitat: Swamps, low grassland or river-side swamps.

Distribution: Japan, Korea, and East Siberia.

Cultivation: Plant in a special pot which is baked hard; use soil mixed with field soil, sand and humus or peat, half and half, manured diluted decayed oil cakes. Propagation by dividing in early February or October to November. Seeding only to get new varieties. Sow the seed in late January by the same method used for other Primroses. Flowers will be expected two years after seeding. Frost protection is needed.

The whole plant covered with whitish multi-cellular pilous hairs; rhizome very short creeping; leaf long stalked, ovate or deltoid ovate or ovate elliptical, rugosus on the upper surface, obtuse at the top and slightly cordate at the base, slightly serrate and irregularly dentate, 4-10 cm. long, 3-6 cm. wide, petiole 1-4 times as long as blade; flower stalk 15-40 cm. long, flower 7-20 in umbel, bract narrow lanceolate, pedicel with granule-like hair, 2-3 cm. long, calyx 8-12 mm long, tubular or funnel-like, 5 lobes about 1/2 to 2/3 depth, sepal acute lanceolate, corolla whitish pink or white or reddish purple with many intermediate forms, 2-3 cm. in diameter, tube 10-13 mm. long; capsule pyramidal flat cubic, 5 mm. in diameter.

P. hidakana Miyabe et Kudo

Japanese name: Hidaka-sakuraso, means *native to Province Hidaka, Hokkaido*.

Flower red with yellow throat.

Flower: May

Locality: Mt. Hidaka, Hokkaido.

Habitat: On rock or rock crevices in the valleys of alpine zone.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Rhizome reclining, hard, covered with brown scales, old petiole remains until the next year; leaves 1-3, round or kidney shaped, cordate, 1.5-4.5 cm. long, 2-5.5 cm. wide, slightly 7-lobed palmately, coarse hairy on the upper surface or glabrous ciliate at the margin and on the vein of lower surface, each lobe deltoid with irregular teeth, petiole 3-17 cm. long, hairy at the upper part; flower stalk higher than the leaf 5-12 cm. long, glabrous, flower 1-2, bract small lanceolate, ciliate at the margin, pedicel 1-2 cm. long, calyx has short hair, tubular 6-7 mm. long, 5-lobed about 2/3 depth, sepal obtuse, hair at the margin; corolla red, 2.5 cm. in diameter, tube about 1 cm long, throat yellow; capsule long elliptic, twice as long as calyx which is 11-13 mm.

Variety: var. *Kamuiana* (Miyabe et Tatew.) Hara.

– *P. kamuiana* Miyabe et Tatewaki

Japanese name: Kamui-kozakura.

Grows on Mt. Kamuickushikaushi and Mt. Petegari, Province Hidaka, Hokkaido.

P. jesoana Miq.

– *hondoensis* Nakai et Kitagawa

– *jesoana* var. *glabra* Takeda

Japanese name: O-Sakuraso, means *big primrose*.

Miyama-sakuraso, means *primrose grown in deep mountains* (miyama).

Flowers dark reddish purple.

Flower: July to August

Locality: Northern Honshu, Hokkaido.

Habitat: Under the deciduous forest of subalpine zone.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Variety:

var *pubescens* (Takeda) Takeda et Hara

– *P. jesoana* Miq. forma *pubescens* Takeda

– *P. jesomontana* Nakai et Kitagawa

var. *nudiuscula* Nakai et Kitagawa

– *P. jesoana* var. *pubescens* forma *nudiuscula* (Nakai et Kitagawao) Hara.

Japanese name: Ezo-o-sakuraso (Ezo is Hokkaido.)

Petiole, flower stalk and pedicel pilous, grows in Hokkaido.

Occasionally a white one which is named forma *albiflora* Tatew.

Cultivation: Half shade, moist place is best for growth. Put it in a cool place especially in summer: use good drainage soil, preferably bottom-watering if potted. Best soil is mixed peat, sand, and sphagnum with small amount of tiny gravel. Propagate by dividing stock in March or October or by seeding immediately after collecting. Soon after flowering, transplant it to gravel with bottom water in order to protect from summer decay. Sow the seed on bed in which fine cut sphagnum is mixed with about the same amount of sand; hold till spring as

germination will not take place until the next March or April; flowers two to three years after germination.

Perennial herb. Leaf with long glabrous stalk, blade round kidney shape about 10 cm. in diameter, slightly palmate lobed, each lobe somewhat deltoid, serrate dentate; flower stalk glandular pubescent 20-30 cm. long, flower in 1-3 whorls, few flowers radiate on each whorl, corolla high disk shape, dark reddish purple, 5-lobed, each lobe obcordate, 1.5-2.5 mm. in diameter, tube 12-14 mm. long; capsule 7-12 mm. long, ovate oblong elliptic.

P. Takedana Tatewaki

Japanese name: Teshio-kozakura, means *native to Province Teshio, Hokkaido*.

White bloom with yellow center.

Flower: May to June.

Locality: Sakkuru, Nupuromapporo, Province Teshio; R. Kikusui (Matsuneshiri), Province Kitami, Hokkaido.

Habitat: Subalpine zone.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Leaf long stalked, round kidney shape, in young membranaceous with pilose hairs on both sides, papery almost gla-

brous in adult, 3-5 cm. in diameter, palmately 9-11 lobed, each lobe oblong elliptic or elliptic, generally 3-parted, acute or obtuse hard apex, each part deltoid or ovate lanceolate; flower stalk 16 cm. long, pilose as same as petiole, 2-3 flowers in umbel, bract small linear lanceolate, corolla white, and center yellow, petal obovate or long elliptic, 2-lobed at the apex, tube 6-8 mm. long; capsule short cylindrical, about 12 mm. long.

P. kisoana Miq.

Japanese name: Kakkoso; kiso-zakura, means *native to Province Kiso, Honshu*.

Rare perennial herb, flower purplish red or white with reddish strain.

Flower: May

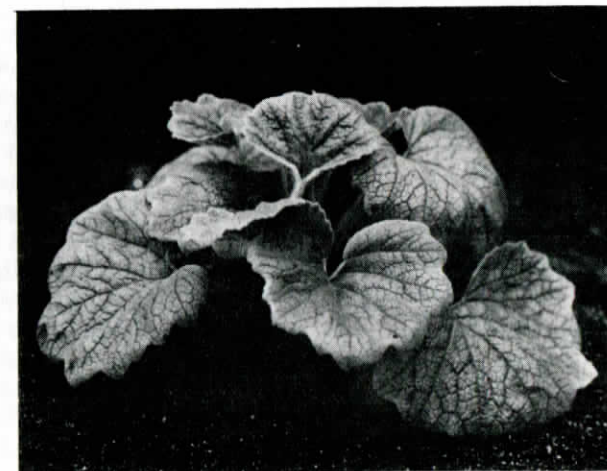
Locality: Middle part, that is Japanese alps district and Kanto district of Honshu.

Habitat: under the deciduous forest of deep mountains. Very humus on the surface of soil with moderate or little to much moisture.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Rare perennial herb thickly covered with pilose hair; leaf long-stalked, round kidney shape, cordate at the base, 5-10

P. kisoana



cm. in diameter, slightly palmately lobed, each lobe deltoid and obtuse dentate; flower stalk longer than the leaves, few flowers in umbel, flower purplish red or white with reddish strain, calyx 10-12 mm. long with brown soft hair, sepal linear lanceolate, corolla 2-3 cm. in diameter, tube 15-20 mm. long; capsule shorter than the calyx, ovate cube about 5 mm. long.

Variety: var. *shikokiana* Makino

– *P. shikokiana* (Makino) Nakai

Leaf somewhat tender and yellowish green on the upper surface. Lower surface, on the other hand, purplish green and pilose along vein, flower 5-10 sometimes in two whorls, calyx 12-13 mm. long, sepal lanceolate, growing in deep mountains of Shikoku Island.

P. tosaensis Yatabe

Japanese name: Iwa-zakura, means *primrose grown on rock* (Iwa)

Tosa-zakura, means *native to Province Tosa, Shikoku*.

Perennial herb with purplish red bloom.

Flower: April to May.

Locality: South of Nara prefecture in Honshu, Shikoku, and Kuyushu.

Habitat: Deep forest of Mountain Zone.

Distribution: Japan proper.

Perennial herb with short rhizome; leaf long stalked, 1-2 times as long as blade, round cordate or ovate cordate, obtuse at the top, 4-7 cm. in diameter, glabrous on upper surface, pilose on the vein of lower surface, slightly serrate at the margin; flower stalk 1-15 cm. high, pilose but glabrous at upper part, bract broad linear, pedicel 2-5 in umbel, 1-2.5 cm. long, flower purplish red, 2.5-3 cm. in diameter, calyx 6-8 mm. long, 1/2-2/3 depth lobed, sepal obtuse and hard pointed end, tube 15-20 mm. long, slender, capsule long pilular shaped, erect and brownish, 1-2.5 cm. long.

P. reinii Fr. et Sav.

– *Okamotoi* Koidz.

– *hondoensis* Nakai

Japanese name: Koiwa-zakura, means *small-(Ko-) primrose grown on rock* (Iwa-)

Miyama-zakura, means *primrose grown in deep mountain*.

Flower: May.

Locality: Kanto, Chubu (Middle), Kinki districts of Honshu.

Habitat: Deep forest of Mountain Zone.

Distribution: Japan.

Varieties:

(a) var. *kitadakensis* (Hara) Ohwi

– *P. kitadakensis* Hara

– *P. hisauchii* Miyabe et Tatew.

Japanese name: Kumoi-kozakura, means *grown high up to the clouds* (Kumoi) *is streaming*.

(b) var. *brachycarpa* (Hara) Ohwi

– *P. rhodotricha* Nakai

– *P. senanensis* Koidz.

– *P. tosaensis* forma *brachycarpa* Hara

Japanese name: Chichibu-iwazakura, means *native to Province Chichibu, Honshu*.

(c) var. *ovatifolia* Ohwi

Japanese name: Nagaba-koiwazakura, means *long leaved small primrose which grows on rock*.

Cultivation: Pot culture in rockeries, use special soil mixed with peat and sand. Propagate by dividing or seeding.

Commonly cultivated by many growers. Perennial herb with slender rhizome. Whole plant covered with thickly pilose hairs. Leaf long stalked, 1-3 cm. in diameter, roundish or kidney shaped, cordate at the base, slightly serrate to 7-9 palmate, pubescent or almost glabrous on the upper surface and pilose on the vein of bottom half of lower surface; flower stalk 5-10 cm. as long as leaf, flower 2-6 in umbel, corolla 2-3 cm. in diameter, light pink purple, 5 parted and each 2 forked, tube 1-13 mm. long; capsule 5-13 mm. long, oblong elliptic or short cylindrical, light green. White one so-called forma *albiflora* Makino.

Try This On For Size!

Dee Peck

Philadelphia, Pa.

On Saturday, January 4th, the members of the Doretta Klaber chapter met to initiate a unique enterprise. Determined to improve their skill in growing primulas, they decided to embark upon an in-depth study plan. The group will spend a full Saturday morning, once every other month throughout 1986, sharing problems and expertise, and learning new techniques.

Each participant paid \$15 to insure interest and attendance and to help pay incidental expenses. There will be refunds at the conclusion of the year, based on attendance (\$5 will be deducted for each missed meeting!!)

The first order of business was sharing. In turn, each told which primulas he or she grew, and enlarged upon successes and failures. None of us seemed to be really satisfied with our prowess!! The only primulas that were acceptably successful were, as might be expected, *Primula vulgaris*, *P. veris*, *P. elatior*, *P. x polyantha*, *P. japonica*, *P. Sieboldii*, *P. denticulata* and the Juliana hybrids. There were many who had trouble even with some of these. A few had had good results with *P. Auricula*, and *P. kisoana*. There was a notable lack of success with *P. rosea*!! My personal ambition is a stand of *P. x Bullesiana*, with which I have been smitten ever since seeing sweeps of them in Switzerland and Vancouver. Is it impossible in the east?

Let it be understood at this point, that the group involved are no slouches as growers. In most of our gardens are

many difficult plants which we have convinced to adapt and stay with us. But conditions for the bulk of the *Primulaceae* are, to say the least, not ideal in the Delaware Valley area. Our summers are exceedingly hot and humid (**perfect** for growing spider mites), our winters a seesaw between below-freezing and sudden thaws, with rarely any snow cover. We dare not put young plants into the ground any later than the end of August (when it is still **hot**) – mid-September at the latest. If we do, there is not time for the root growth needed to anchor them throughout our weird winters. At the other end, we dare not pot-up seedlings or permanently place young plants any later than the end of May, unless we are prepared to cosset them like crazy (with no guarantees that it will work!!) As you can see, the only **good** time for us to work with the little darlings is March, April and May, when they are in bloom!! Yet, we can't resist 'em, and keep on trying. You can understand why, when we do manage to establish a good colony of any kind, we Easterners feel pretty cocky.

Your editor, Richard Critz, was the chief instigator of this project, and spent a great deal of time preparing for it. After perusing reams of back issues of "Primroses", he had ready for us copies of many articles that had been written over the years by primula growers in the east. Our first project is for each of us to digest this material, then

choose one or more germination and growing-on systems. Seed of a number of species and varieties have been made available to us, which we are to grow according to our chosen methods, keeping a detailed record on data sheets furnished to us. All the data gathered will be shared, compared, and conclusions drawn. I'm sure that this information will also be printed in "Primroses" for everyone's benefit.

We brought our lunches, and while eating together after the meeting, were able to informally share ideas, and get to know each other better. Fun!

If the activities of our group intrigue you, start your own local study group. **Your** conditions are different. Think how valuable all this information from all over the country, or even the world, would be !!

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Florists Societies and Feasts After 1750

Part II

by Ruth Duthie
Oxford, England

(What follows is the second half of Miss Duthie's fascinating article, begun in the last issue of PRIMROSES. This part is a detailed summary of the research upon which some final conclusions are based. The Editor wishes to thank Florence Bellis for having directed him to the material, as well as the author for providing the illustrations.)

Suffolk and Essex

As reported in my previous article (Duthie, 1982), the *Ipswich Journal* carried more advertisements for florists' meetings than any other newspaper in the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1750 there were notices of five auricula, two tulip and three carnation shows. Ten years later, annual auricula shows were advertised to take place at Sudbury, Colchester, and at the Bowling-Green, Ipswich (all 19 April) and at Hadleigh (26 April) and though no tulip or carnation meeting was advertised for 1760, they had not ceased.

In 1772, the usual auricula shows took place at Colchester and at the Gardeners' Arms, Ipswich (25 April) and also at the Bowling-Green in the same town (2 May). The rivalry, noted in my previous article, continued between the societies that met at these two Ipswich inns. At Rycraft's Gardeners' Arms, 'no person will be admitted to shew any flower unless he is a Member of the Society', while at Jackerman's Bowling-Green, the owner of the best auricula would be entitled to 'pair of salts if he is not a member of Mr. Rycraft's Society'. The societies seem to have been organized by the inn keepers, and it is known Jackerman was a gardener, because he offered a two-guinea reward to anyone discovering the robbers of his

cucumber frames (23 May 1772).

That year tulip shows were to take place at the same two inns (23 May) but only at the Bowling-Green was a carnation competition advertised (8 August). Prizes were offered for the best bizarre and flake flowers. In 1773 (17 July), the 'annual florists' Feast' was to take place at Chelmsford.

By 1780, the Society at the Gardener's Arms had ceased, but at the Bowling-Green, auricula (19 April), tulip (20 May) and carnation (29 July) shows were announced. Auricula meetings were also to be staged at Woodbridge and Colchester (19 April). The Bowling-Green Society was still active in 1786, and though no tulip show was advertised that year, in the following one there was a show (12 May) when prizes were to be given for the best yellow- and the best white-ground flowers. To revert to 1786, auricula shows were also to take place at Stowmarket and Colchester (29 April) and at Woodbridge (6 May). That year too, the only notice of a pink show advertised in this newspaper was to be held at Hadleigh (24 June).

The Woodbridge auricula show is of interest because it is one of the rare ones where both the advertisement and the report of the show was found; because of this, a full report is given:

"Woodbridge, May 4, 1786
The annual shew of Auriculas will be held at the Bull Inn, on Monday next, the 8th inst. where any person, being a member of a free society of florists, who shall shew the best blown flower, which shall be on his own property Three Months prior to the date thereof, will be entitled to a piece of plate of a guinea value; the second to a prize of half-a-guinea; and he that produces the best seedling of his own raising to five shillings.

The company of florists and others will be esteemed a favour. By their humble servants, Robert Lankester, President, John Linstead and William Fox, Stewards. The flowers to be deliv-

ered to the care of the stewards at Twelve o'clock. Dinner at One."
The report, from a Woodbridge correspondent, appeared on 20 May:

"Monday last, being the annual shew of Auriculas, the gentlemen florists and their friends met at the Bull in this town, when, after partaking of an elegant dinner, three gentlemen from Ipswich were chosen umpires to discuss the merits of the prize flowers, when after three-quarters of an Hour's inspection, a flower called 'Ardent's Empress of Russia', of 14 pips, was brought in as the best flower, the property of Mr. Henry Winson; another of the same name, containing 12 pips, as the second best, the prop-

erty of Mr. John Calver, both of this place; a seedling of 4 pips, raised by the first gentleman, was entitled to the last prize. Considering the backwardness of the spring, there was as fine a stage of flowers as was ever remembered at the meeting . . . After the shew, the seedling was named 'Winson's Dutchess of Devonshire'. The ceremony over, the three flowers were placed on the table, each adorned with its prize (a silver medal) surrounded by the company, who regaled themselves 'till ten o'clock, when they retired well satisfied with the production of the day."

And what a day! There are some points of interest about the winners and their

flowers. Henry Winson, who won the first and seedling prizes, was a raiser of many saleable cultivars; one called 'Woodbridge' was available from Mad-dock for 10s. 6d. in 1777. The winning variety, which also took the second prize, was 'Empress of Russia', raised by Arden (here spelt Ardent), which appeared in Biggs' catalogue of 1782 and was still available from Clarke of Cambridge in 1793, when it only cost 1s., suggesting it was by then an old-established variety. There was no separation of auriculas into different classes, such as had occurred in carnations and tulips. The reference to 'a free society' of florists probably meant that the competition was not confined to local members.

The Bull at Woodbridge was again the site of an auricula show in 1795 (2 May), when a meeting was also to be held at Stowmarket. No further notices of florists' shows have been found that year, nor in newspapers of 1805 or 1815. However, on 19 May 1823, an auricula show was held at the Sea Horse, Colchester, when 'the party partook of an excellent dinner, and the evening was spent with the greatest conviviality'.

Kent

After 1750, many florists' feasts were advertised in Kentish newspapers. Almost invariably they were referred to as 'annual feasts' and not as 'shews'. These feasts took place in so many villages and towns that, to save space, the information is being presented in a different way.

Polyanthus feasts were almost as common. Fifteen advertisements were seen, but these feasts were confined to a shorter period – between 1766 and 1805. A feature special to the area was that auricula and polyanthus feasts were always separate fixtures; whereas, since these

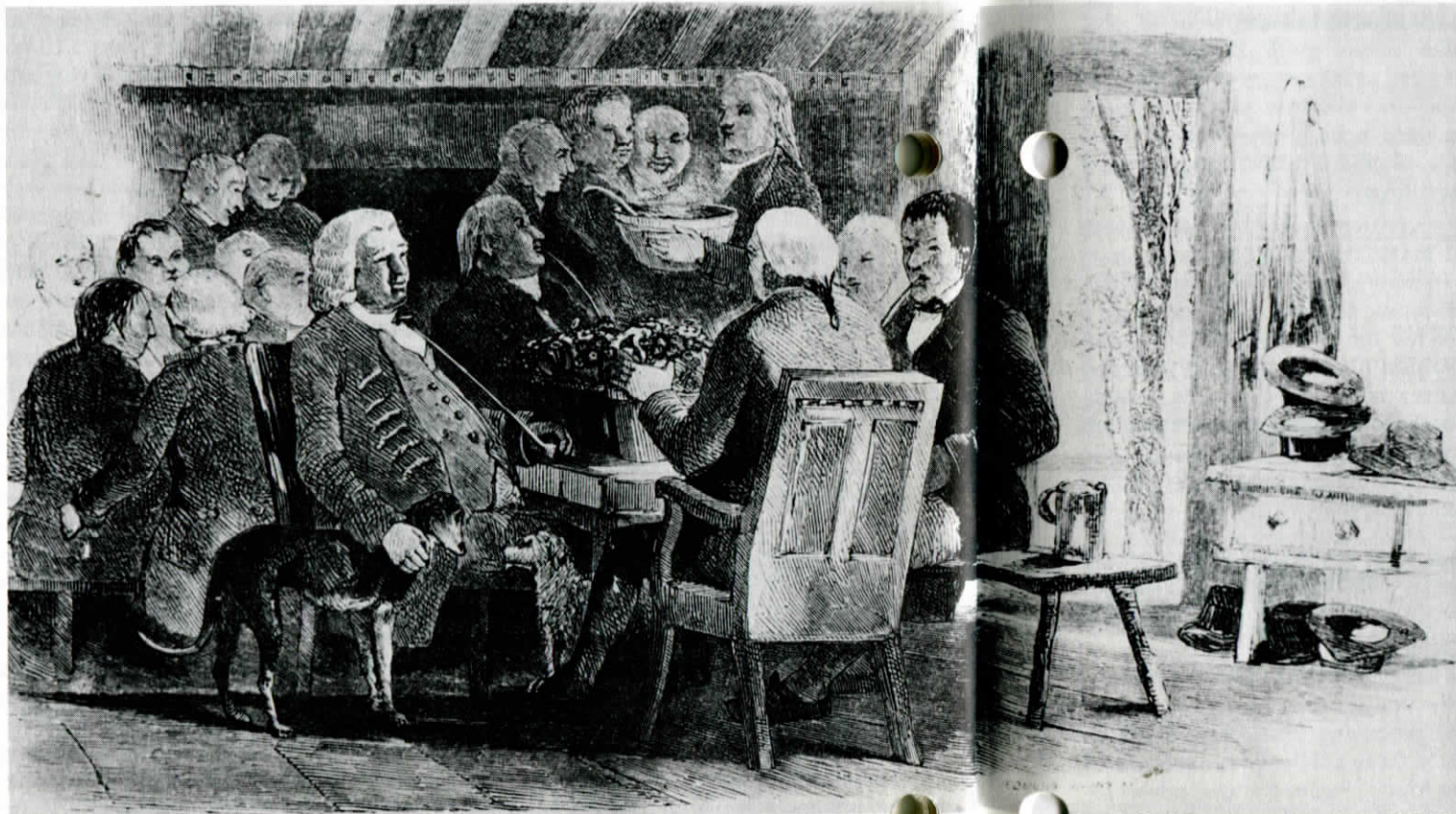


Figure 8. 'Meeting of Florists of Olden Times'. The Frontispiece of volume IV (1851) of *The Florist*. This shows what an eighteenth-century florists' feast might have been like. Photo courtesy of the Royal Horticultural Society.

plants are in flower at the same time of year, they shared a common exhibition in other parts of the country. In Kent, different inns were used to hold the feasts for these plants; for instance, the polyanthus feasts in Canterbury were held at the Vauxhall, while those for auriculas took place at the Star. Polyanthus feasts were advertised at Eastry, Higham, Waldershare, Sandwich and Dover but at none of these were there to be auricula meetings. In 1777, five polyanthus feasts were advertised, but only one for auriculas. Winning trusses of polyanthus had to have five, sometimes six, pips and these were to be 'rose-eyed'.

Apart from the pink feast at Boughton Bleau, when the prize was to be a silver punch ladle, straight money prizes were the rule. Florists' feasts continued for longer in Kent than in other areas. Quite a number were advertised for dates between 1795 and 1820. Many advertisements from nurserymen for florists' flowers appeared in the newspapers, and also some reports of thefts from gardens, including that of auriculas from Walmer Castle (5 April 1748).

The Reading Area

The first advertisement found in the *Reading Mercury* were only in 1780, when notices of three carnation feasts appeared. These were to take place in inns at Old Windsor, Hatch-Gate and at the Bull, Reading (all 24 July), the last two being referred to as annual feasts. Prizes were to be given for the best whole-blown carnations. The dinner tickets, which included a pint of punch, cost 3s. 6d.

Spring feasts also took place: an auricula and polyanthus meeting was advertised for Wokingham (9 April 1781) and the following year 'Gentlemen, Gardeners and Florists' were invited to the feast at Bracknall (16 April). At this there were to be two prizes for auriculas, one for the best polyanthus and one for the finest hyacinth. Wokingham followed the

example of Bracknall in adding hyacinths to the flowers to be exhibited at the spring meeting of 1783 (7 April).

Carnation feasts appear to have been annual events at Reading and at Hatch-Gate (19 July 1782) and to have been held, at least some years, at Bracknall and Mortimer (14 and 21 July 1783). In 1785, the usual spring feast took place at Bracknall (25 April) and summer feasts at Reading and Hungerford (15 July). In 1785 a Melon feast was advertised to take place at Englefield Green (25 July). The first prize was to go to him who showed 'the best flavoured Rock Canteloup Melon, either green or yellow flesh'.

In 1788, seven advertisements for florists' feasts appeared. An auricula and polyanthus show at Newbury, while at Bracknall, hyacinths were, as usual, also awarded prizes (both 21 April). Pink feasts were to take place at Hungerford (9 June) and Kintbury (16 June). Here prizes were to be given for the six best flowers, all different, and also for the six best seedlings.

No advertisement for any feasts were found in 1805 but in 1820, pink feasts were to be held at Kintbury and at Reading (26 June). At the former, prizes were offered for 'the best pot of flowers', and two maiden prizes were to be awarded 'for the encouragement of young florists'. That year, too, annual carnation and melon feasts were advertised to take place at Sonning and at Reading (24 July), and amongst the prizes were ones for large melons, weighing at least 2½ lb. The inclusion of hyacinths in the spring feasts was a special feature of this area.

The Oxford Area

The feasts and shows held by florists, and the flowers they raised, in Oxford and neighbouring towns have been reported in three articles where references can be found. Figure 9 shows advertisements for three feasts, appearing one above the other in one issue of *Jackson's*

FLORIST'S FEAST.

ON Tuesday the 4th of August next, a **FLORIST'S FEAST** will be held at the Black of Orchard Wall, at the SHIP INN, in OXFORD, where, for the Encouragement of Industry and Care, the following Prizes will be given, viz.

To him that shows the six best and completest whole-blown **CARNATIONS**, of different Sorts, a large Silver Spoon.

To him that shows the six second best and completest whole-blown **CARNATIONS**, of different Sorts, five Shillings.

To him that shows the best seedling **CARNATION**, Two Shillings and Six pence.

The Flowers to be delivered into the Care of the Stewards, before Dinner is on the Table, which will be precisely at Two o'Clock. No Person is entitled to show, unless he takes a Ticket. All Tickets in respect of, are desired to be returned on Friday before the Feast.

Richard Williams, }
W. Fortie, Jun. } **STEWARDS.**

A FLORIST'S FEAST

WILL be held at Mr. Clark's, at the SWAN INN, in RICHMOND, on Monday the 20th of August next, where the Company of all Gentlemen, Florists, Gardeners, &c. will be accept big; at which Place there will be a show of **CARNATIONS**. And for the Encouragement of Industry and Care, the following Prizes will be given, viz.

For the finest and completest whole-blown **Carnation**, of six different Sorts, a large Silver Spoon.

For the six second-best, of six different Sorts, Five Shillings.

And
For the best seedling **Carnation**, Half a Crown.

S T E W A R D S.

Mr. Clarey, Steeple Aston.	Mr. Hewlett, Bicester.
Mr. Pribus, ——— Heath.	Mr. Cooke, Brill, Bucks.
Mr. Jaxton, Merton.	Mr. Roberts, Earsby.
Mr. Richards, Alderbury.	

A FLORIST'S FEAST

WILL be held at Mr. ROBERTS's, the QUEEN'S HEAD, in BANBURY, OXFORDSHIRE, on Monday the 3d of August next; where, for the Encouragement of Industry and Care, the following Prizes will be given, viz.

For the six best and completest whole-blown **CARNATIONS**, of different Sorts, a Prize of a large Silver Spoon.

For the six second-best, Five Shillings.

And for the best seedling **Carnation**, Half a Crown.

S T E W A R D S.

Mr. C. Cur, Banbury.	Mr. Clary, Ayles.
Mr. Hayward, Banbury.	Mr. Richards, Alderbury.
Mr. Mansford, Aitrop.	Mr. Sharro, Marston.
Mr. Clarke, Bicester.	Mr. Dixon, Edgcott.

Figure 9: Advertisement for three florists' feasts from 'Jackson's Oxford Journal', 25 July 1772. Photo courtesy of author.

Oxford Journal. More carnation feasts were held than those in spring for the auricula and polyanthus. A carnation and melon feast was advertised to take place in Woodstock in 1805 and as late as 1820, pink feasts were to be held in the villages of Deddington and Hook Norton.

The Society, which later became the Royal Oxfordshire Horticultural Society, formed in 1830, has remained in existence ever since, and still holds three shows annually.

Salisbury

There exists at least one copy of a small book, *A Treatise on the Auricula*; this contains a catalogue of 250 auricula varieties available, in 1782, from T. Biggs of Fisherton, near Salisbury. Thus it seemed desirable to see if local confirmation of this florist, T. Biggs, could be found. In fact, the *Salisbury Journal* of 4 and 11 February 1782 carried advertisements for this little book, price 1s., stating that it could be bought from 'T. Biggs, Florist of Fisherton, near Salisbury'. An auricula feast was to be held that year at the Sun, Fisherton Anger, and the following year, 'Mr. T. Biggs' was to act as steward at the Carnation Feast (21 July). This, and subsequent feasts, were held at the Three Swans for the landlord had moved there from the Sun and it seems it was worth following him, since the dinner was 'incomparably good and liquor excellent'.

Auricula feasts took place in Salisbury in these same years (15 April 1785 and 12 April 1790) but none was advertised for 1791. That year, however, appeared the only notice of a polyanthus feast: it was to be held in Winchester (18 April), when the prize was to be given to the person showing the six best trusses, each with not less than four pips. Carnation feasts were also advertised at Trowbridge (24 July 1775 and 12 August 1782).

Bristol

In his book *The Auricula* (1964), C. O. Moreton referred to an auricula feast

held in Bristol in 1771, the report of which included the names of the winning flowers; since information like this is so rare, it seemed desirable to examine copies of the *Bristol Journal*, not only for confirmation but to see if more reports were provided. At this 1771 feast (27 April), first and second prizes were given for the auricula 'Vise's Green Seedling' and the winning polyanthus was 'Brown's Incomparable' (incidentally the only example found of the successful polyanthus variety being named). This 'Green Seedling' is of interest because Emmerton claimed it was the first true green-edged flower ever raised and that from its seed later varieties were produced. It must have been a well-established cultivar for it appears in most of the early catalogues. Because of its historic importance it was hoped to find an illustration, but though none of it has so far been discovered, another of Vice's green-edged flowers appears in an album of flower drawings by T. Robins. This variety, called 'Royal Baker', (mentioned in the introduction of this article) was stocked by Maddock in 1777 for 2s. 6d., while 'Green Seedling' cost 2s., suggesting the latter was the older variety.

At Newcastle in 1768, the winning auricula was 'Don Quixote', said to be known as 'Courtney's Adonis' in the South (see section on Newcastle). The third prize at the first show of 1772 was once again 'Vise's Green Seedling'.

The Gloucester Area

The *Gloucester Journal* had provided much information about florist activity described in my previous article in *Garden History* (Duthie, 1982). Spring and summer feasts were advertised to take place in Gloucester itself and in towns as far away as Swindon. Many of these were reported in an article by Roland Austin. Nearby Tetbury also held an auricula feast in 1765 (15 April) when a prize was also to be given for the best polyanthus 'in or out of a pot'. These were the last

spring feasts to be advertised in this newspaper but Tetbury had a carnation feast in 1775 (17 July), as did Stroud (24 July), and here it was referred to as an annual event. At this feast the flowers 'were to be dissected before the company': this was probably more to prevent cheating by such devices as adding petals, than in the pursuit of botany.

In 1794 (21 July) and 1796 (18 July), a 'Florist and Melon Feast' was advertised to take place at the Upper George Coffee House in Gloucester. Prizes were to be given for the largest and best flavoured melon and for the finest carnations. No further advertisements for feasts were seen

Lancashire and Cheshire

The area round Manchester has always had the reputation of having been the centre of the florist movement and undoubtedly parts of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire were the hub of the artisan florist activity in the first half of the nineteenth century, while in towns like Middleton, near Manchester, auricula and gooseberry shows date back to the later part of the previous century. It was therefore surprising and disappointing to find not a single advertisement for a florists' feast or show in any eighteenth-century newspaper of the region examined.

It seems highly probable that the traditional type of florists' feasts took place in the inns of the surrounding industrial towns in the eighteenth century. Local societies may have been so well organized that they did not need to advertise in the press; and in any case towns, like Middleton and Rochdale, did not have their own newspapers until the middle of the nineteenth century.

York

There was an exceptionally interesting occurrence in York in the latter half of the eighteenth century when a florists' society, which later became known as the Ancient Society of York Florists, was

formed in 1768. This Society has been in continuous existence ever since and still holds three shows each year. Almost more remarkable is that most of its records have been preserved. There is an article describing the Society, so only a summary will be provided here.

The records provide very full information about the shows that were held from the first year onward, telling what flowers were exhibited and won the prizes: we know the names of those who were successful and generally there is a list of each year's membership. When the Society was formed, a full set of rules was agreed upon and it was laid down that the annual feast should take place on the day of the first show of the year, when prizes were given for the finest auricula, polyanthus and hyacinth. The tulip show followed in May, that for the ranunculus in June, while the carnation show was held in August. It was not until 1805 that a pink show, in July, was added. For a few years from 1810, there was a class for anemones at the tulip meeting; thus for those years all eight classic florists' flower were exhibited. During the first sixty years no other flowers were exhibited; however gooseberry competitions were introduced in 1804, but were separate from the main shows and later faded out.

Early in the nineteenth century, separate classes for different forms of the flowers were introduced, such as ones for self-coloured, green-, or china-edged auriculas or for plain, or laced pinks: indeed so many subdivisions were made, and so many prizes awarded within each class, that by 1857 at least 340 were to be distributed that year. Frequently the names of the winning cultivars were recorded and since prizes were given for the best seedling auriculas, polyanthuses, pinks and carnations, we know that these plants were being raised locally.

Undoubtedly this York Society, like so many of the general horticultural ones, reached its zenith of popularity towards the end of the nineteenth century up to the outbreak of the First World War.

The Society was founded, organized, and patronized, at least for the first eighty years, largely by York tradesmen, including nurserymen, though supported, and increasingly so, by the gentry and clergy of the area. So far as is known, this Society is the oldest one of its kind in existence.

Newcastle Upon Tyne

In the *Newcastle Journal* of 12 September of 1767 there appeared an account of a Mr. Hilcoat winning a gold ring for the finest carnation at a local meeting; and in the following year an auricula show took place at the same inn, at which Mr. William Hilcoat acted as steward (7 May). The advertisement for this meeting (16 April) included the following interesting statement: 'the Society consider this Meeting as a Source of Delight and not of Extravagance and Luxury, which was the only Rock former Societies of this sort split upon'. It was reported that a large company enjoyed a handsome dinner and after the usual toasts, the flowers were exhibited and the gold ring went to Mr. Patten, goldsmith (coals to Newcastle?) for his auricula, 'Don Quixote', known as 'Courtney's Adonis' in the South (see section on Bristol). In the same issue, this 'Society of Florists and Lovers of Gardening' stated they intended taking steps to catch and punish robbers of gardens.

This 'Society of Florists and Lovers of Gardening' was still to hold an 'Auricula Shew (22 April) and one for carnations (15 August) in 1780. And that year too, in Sunderland on the same dates, appeared advertisements for an auricula and polyanthus meeting and for a carnation show, both organized by the 'Society of Gentlemen and Gardener Florists'.

Melon Feasts and Gooseberry Shows

Melon feasts have been mentioned in

some of the separate sections of this article. They occurred at various dates between 1785 and 1820, generally in connection with carnation feasts. The winning melon was usually judged on the excellence of its flavour, but only at the feast at Englefield Green is there much said about the variety of fruit exhibited; there the prize was to go to 'the best flavoured Rock Canteloupe, green or yellow flesh'.

The Revd Gilbert White gives a vivid picture of his passion for growing fine melons and this interest must have been widespread, but only amongst fairly well-to-do gardeners, while growing enormous gooseberries was a favourite hobby of those in a humbler sphere of life. At these gooseberry shows the prize went to the heaviest berries, flavour not being considered. Generally the competitions were held separately from floral shows but, as in Nottingham in 1796, they sometimes took place at the carnation feast. In the late eighteenth century, gooseberry shows seem to have been held all over the country but their heyday was in the first half of the next century in the towns of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. The heaviest berry recorded was the red-skinned variety 'London' (frequently a winner) of 37 dwts 7 grs (2.05 oz or 58 g) in 1852. These traditional gooseberry shows still take place in some Cheshire towns and at Egton Bridge near Whitby.

The Paisley Florist Society

This, though by no means the only Florists' society to have been formed in Scotland, is so far as is known the longest-lived surviving one. It was founded in 1782 and has been active ever since; it is therefore second only to the Ancient Society of York Florists in the date of its foundation. Its minute books, too, are preserved. The Society meets nine times a year for lectures and holds its annual show in September.

The Revd W. Ferrier (the Minister) made some interesting comments on the relation between weaving and growing fine flowers. Weavers have, of course, been noted as florists and there has long been a supposition that these skills went hand in hand: Ferrier gives strong support to this idea, writing:

It is well known, that not only for the execution of the most delicate ornamental muslins, but for the invention of patterns, the operative manufacturers of Paisley stand unrivalled. Their ingenuity is continually in exertion for new and pleasing elegancies, to diversify their fabrics. Now, where such habits obtain, the rearing of beautiful flowers, which is an object very congenial to them, will easily be adopted and pursued as a favourite amusement. On the other hand, it seems highly probable that the rearing of flowers, by a re-action, must tend to improve the genius for invention in elegant muslins.

It is, of course, for their laced and black and white pinks that the Paisley florists were most famous, so it is disappointing that the account gives little information about the origin of the laced forms, nor the names of the Paisley cultivars. The Paisley Society, like most present-day horticultural societies, holds its show in the autumn, so does not have a class for pinks; however, there is at present much interest both in Scotland and in England in rescuing cultivars of old pinks wherever they may have been produced. The variety 'Paisley Gem' is still in cultivation and other locally raised ones may still be found.

One particularly happy feature of the Paisley Florist Society is that it possesses two trophies presented to former winners. One, a silver-mounted ramshorn snuff-box, dated 1813 (Figure 10), was given for the twelve best pinks, while the other, a silver medallion, was presented

for the finest hyacinth. In fact, these are the only Florists' awards ever encountered. Not a single table spoon presented in England has ever been found.

Conclusion

Florists' Societies flourished in almost every part of the country in the eighteenth century and competitions for the finest flowers, held at their feasts, were at their height between 1740 and 1785, at the very time that saw the Landscape Movement at its fullest development. Towards the end of the century there was a decline in the number of these florists' meetings, judging by the numbers advertised in local newspapers.

In the 1820s and 1830s, general horticultural societies were formed in many towns and quite a few of these societies still survive. At the shows organized by the new societies, fruit, vegetables and a wide range of flowering plants were exhibited and awarded prizes. Florists' flowers still played an important part and the time at which they flowered determined, at least at first, the date at which the shows were held. Small, local florists' societies continued to exist as well for many years.

It is not clear why there was this change from the old florists' feasts to the general horticultural societies. In 1934, W. Roberts wrote that at the time when the Horticultural Society (the future RHS)

held its first exhibition in 1827, the old florists' societies had become 'parochial in character. They were a kind of set-off to cock-fighting and other "sports" of anything but an elevating type'. He considered that the establishment of the horticultural Society on a 'dignified and national basis led to a vast increase in the number of horticultural societies in the provinces and sounded the death knell of the Florists' Feasts'.

As early as the 1820s, Thomas Hogg, who had personal knowledge of florists' societies, gave a fictional account of the experiences of a novice florist at a feast from which he came away disappointed, having spent most of his money standing bumpers for the members who had still failed to give a name to his fine seedling. It may well have been that interest in convivial parties had rather ousted love for their flowers, but I believe that the rise of the new, enlarged societies was mainly due to the increase in numbers of well-trained head-gardeners and to the increasing importance of the glass-houses which these gardeners cared for, and used for growing fine fruit as well as a large range of tender flowering plants. The exclusive interest in florists' flowers had become too restrictive, and indeed florists themselves about this time added pansies, then dahlias and soon a number of other flowers to those for which they held competitions.



Figure 10 Ramshorn Snuff Box. Presented by the Paisley Florist Society in 1804 for the twelve finest pinks. Photo by J. M. Forrester.

This article reprinted from the Spring 1984 issue of 'Garden History', Vol. 12, No. 1 by permission of the author.

Judging the Primrose Shows

A General Guide

By the Committee

Be sure to read the Schedule carefully, beforehand.

Bring a copy of the Point Score with you. Judges will use scoring only when plants are in close competition. POINT SCORE: 85-100 Blue, 80-85 Red, 70-80 White.

Expect three plants of the same color in each class, unless the Schedule states otherwise.

Look for substance, texture, floriferousness – a well-balanced plant, pleasing to the eye. Foliage should be healthy, free from disease and pests; and not overfertilized.

If any pots have exposed tags, or if any plant needs to be turned or moved, ask a clerk to correct the situation. A judge must not touch any part of a plant, pot or tag.

Look for clean pots – clay or plastic. Take off five (5) points for a dirty pot.

Never decide that a plant which is easy to grow does not deserve your best judging, or a trophy.

If a stem is fasciated, deduct ten (10) points.

When judging your own plants, don't "overlook" – be a little more discerning.

There must be no rejudging after a set of judges has completed its work. If a major fault is discovered before judging is complete, a plant may be rejudged by a **majority** of judges.

Once a plant is on the trophy table, there it stays. A **majority** panel of all judges working this show pick the trophies.

Bamford Trophy: only edged show auriculas are eligible.

Stakes are allowed on show auriculas only. These must be small, neat and inconspicuous, and must terminate below the umbel. No cotton will be allowed.

Exhibition or show plants (with the exception of Gold or Silver Laced Polyanthas) should show one umbel only. Others may be tied down out of sight.

Exhibition or show plants are to be judged on a majority of the pips, not just one.

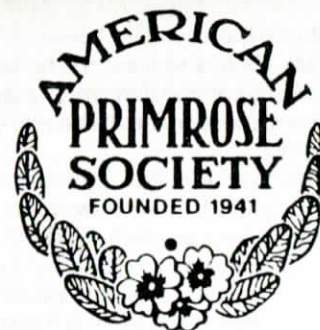
As judges, we do not grow or know all species well. Since individual specimens of these can vary widely in appearance, it is essential to be especially attentive to the entire plant in judging species primulas.

A plant must have been in the possession of its exhibitor six (6) months before it can be entered in a show.

When several plants are in close competition, and scoring does not resolve the dilemma, additional characteristics should be taken into account: rose crown, unusual color, greatest depth or intensity of color, most beautiful or unusual eye, fragrance, floriferousness, strength of stem, overall condition of umbel, most perfect foliage.

Remember: a primula show is not a standard flower show – each plant is judged on its own merits.

Companion plants, however perfect or attractive, may not compete for "best plant in show."



Information

The following letter is from one of our members in England.

Dear Editor,

I was quite interested in the Pearson/Doonan article. We have just moved to our present address (where conditions are quite different), but formerly we gardened on pure sand, with only about 6" of top soil. We discovered this when we first started with alpine primulas and decided to dig out the 18" for a scree. After the first six inches we decided it would be better to mix the top 9" with a good compost and peat, adding some 3/8" grit or pea gravel. This made a wonderful place for growing high alpiners. For each of the 8 years we gardened here, we used a slow-acting fertilizer and top dressed with grit. Each year these materials just disappeared into the medium. Plants grew beautifully, but were not over-sized. They kept cool and moist, too, even in the drought of 1983.

We belong to the Leicester Alpine

Society. Most members grow auriculas, but few try the vulgaris cultivars. I think this is due to garden size. You have to draw the line somewhere, and the hybrid vernaes take a lot of space. But the Leicester group is due to pay us a garden visit this spring and who knows – perhaps after seeing them here they might tuck a few into odd corners back home.

Hope you can see the *Soldanella* hard up against the rock in the picture. We also find that *Rhodohypoxis* come through our wet winters nicely, but *Lewisi* are not always reliable. We grow these in old flat sinks, and cover them during the damp months of the year.

The soil at our present (new) garden is a lovely moisture-retaining black loam. I am hoping it will prove acceptable to the petiolarid and nivalid primulas. I shall top dress their beds rather heavily with pea gravel. We find that what seed we miss comes up right in place that way, and within 12 months

View of Ethel Howitt's garden at 'Rose Cottage'.



are blooming size plants themselves. At the new house we have a small area which gets only a bit of morning sun – just right for the vulgaris cultivars, hardy fuschias and hellebores. Ah, gardening!

Thanks again for your article.

Ethel Howitt, 'Rose Cottage,' 182 Station Road, Ratby, Leicester, LE6 0JP, England

Minutes of the Winter Board Meeting

The January meeting of the American Primrose Society was called to order at 11:50 A.M., January 18, 1986, at the home of Herbert Dickson.

There was a question concerning the minutes of the last meeting, pertaining to the serving time of the Board members. The dates were established to read; Orval Agee and Al Rapp will serve until 1987. Rosetta Jones and Etha Tate's term expires this year. They and Lena Smith and Heather McKee are on the ballot for election this year. Two will be voted on to serve for the coming year. After this correction the minutes were approved as corrected.

Ruth Huston asked that members write her concerning the Round Robin. She is anxious to get them established again. Her address is, P.O. Box 42, Gig Harbor, Washington 98335.

The Treasurer reported that we are in good shape. Expenses are climbing but are being balanced out by income from various sources.

A letter from Editor Critz was read and acted upon. Mr. Critz would like to promote a show of pictures. This would provide his library with pictures to use in the quarterly, and also stimulate interest among members to photograph their creations and perhaps write articles for the quarterly; thereby sharing their experiences, problems, and pleasures of raising primula with

others. More on this later.

Mr. Critz and Florence Bellis will be in charge of the 50th anniversary of the American Primrose Society to be held in 1991.

The Show judge reported that she had printed the show rules for all judges, and would have them printed in the quarterly.

Terri Koch is still working on the Job description for officers. Brian Skidmore will provide her with a form which was made several years ago.

The secretary read a letter received from Mr. Hu Chi-Ming from China, thanking us for his honorary membership and telling us of his work the last 20 years with primroses. He is writing a book on the Flora of China. It will consist of two volumes, with Primula being in the second one. He hopes to have them published in the next two years.

The meeting was adjourned.
Respectfully submitted
Candy Strickland

The National Show

By the time you read this the National Show and Annual Meeting will have been held at Totem Lake Mall in Washington. This year the guest of honor will be Beth Tait of Bothell, WA.

Beth began her membership in 1954 with the Washington State Primrose Society and later joined the American Primrose Society in 1959. For her many years as APS Treasurer from 1961 to 1973, Beth was given a life membership to the APS.

At the 1977 National Show in Redmond, WA, Beth won top honors including the prized Bamford trophy for best show auricula seedling. Her award winning plant, an intense red self, has been named 'American Beauty'. With such a great interest in hybridizing primula Beth has raised three auricula and five julies named from her own

seed. Quite an accomplishment! And because of her interest in hybridizing, she started the APS perpetual C.F. HILL Trophy for his hybridizing of alpine auriculas.

Through her business PRIMROSE ACRES formed in 1959, Beth supplied the Orthopedic Hospital spring plant sale with countless plants for twenty years. She has now ventured into a new business, BETH's BOUQUETS.

The American Primrose Society wishes to thank Beth Tait for her years of hard work and dedicated service.

From the Treasurer

To all United Kingdom members: the Treasurer reminds all those who wish


to pay in sterling that cheques for £7.50, pay to *Brian Skidmore, Treasurer*, may be sent to:

Acct. No. 0291941
Lloyds Bank, C & C Branch
49 Milson St., Bath
BA1 1DX, England

However, those taking advantage of this service **MUST** also write Mr. Skidmore in Mercer's Island, WA to inform him that the cheque has been deposited (the dues envelope is an excellent way to do this) or proper credit will not be made. The bank does not forward the names of received. Last year 5 out of 15 depositors did not send this information on to the USA.



A double acaulis seedling raised by Rosetta Jones, 1985.



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1985-86 Seed Exchange

We had a good response to the Seed Exchange this year. Our supply of seeds was almost all 1985 stuff – only a few species not of the current crop. And there was a very good selection to choose from.

We lost our old reliable House of Douglas suppliers of show auricula seed this year, but found a new one – Cravens, also in England. And the folks there became members of our society as well. Cravens supplies many kinds of seed as well as plants in many varieties.

How can I encourage more of you members to become donors? Really, it's

so easy – it hardly hurts at all. Be sure to label your plants and packets so that you will be sure of the variety, clean the seeds well, and keep them in a cool, dark, dry place (the refrig., naturally) until they are mailed.

We are stressing SPECIES – so please, please try to find and save seed of these.

If while you are enjoying your gardens this year, you have time, write me and let me know how your garden grows. It is important to the seed exchange to know the quality of the seeds and your success with them. They are kept in the proper environment for survival and are sent to you with best wishes for good growth.

Candy



Welch's dark brown double auricula. Larry Bailey's plant.

American Primrose Society

Officers

President: Albert Smith, 112 Kennedy Drive, Duvall, WA 98019

Vice President: Terri Koch, 12495 Sunnyview Rd. NE, Salem, OR 97301

Recording Secretary: Ester (Candy) Strickland, 2722 E. 84th, Tacoma, WA 98445

Treasurer: Brian Skidmore, 6730 West Mercer Way, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Editor Emeritus: Florence Bellis, 2835 N. Oar Avenue, Lincoln City, OR 97367

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Etha Tate, Milwaukee, OR 1983

Thelma Genheimer, Beaverton, OR 1984

Presidents of affiliated societies and chapters

Irene Buckles, Seattle, WA 1984

Orville Agee, Milwaukee, OR 1985

Al Rapp, Tacoma, WA 1985

Membership

Dues of \$10 a year are payable Nov. 15. Membership includes four issues annually of the Quarterly, cultural chart and seed exchange privileges. Sustaining member \$50. Life membership, \$200; garden club affiliated societies, \$10 a year; library and horticultural societies, \$10 a year; second member in family, \$1 a year. Overseas members, \$10 a year; please send by international money order. Send dues to the treasurer.

Publications

Back issues of the Quarterly are available. Order from the secretary.

Manuscripts for publication in the quarterly are solicited from members and other gardening experts, although there is no payment. Please send articles and photographs to the editor at 1236 Wendover Ave., Rosemont, PA 19010.

Advertising rates per issue: full page \$60; half page \$30; quarter page \$15; eighth page and minimum \$10. Submit advertising to the editor.

Seed Exchange

Ester Strickland, chairman. 2722 E. 84th, Tacoma, WA 98445.

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A Synoptic Guide to the Genus *Primula*

by

G. K. Fenderson

This book is intended to serve as a basic reference to the genus *Primula*. Approximately 1375 species, synonyms, and hybrids are included, each with complete reference to author, initial publication, and current status; for nonhybrid taxa, details of typification are also given. Distribution, habitat, altitude, section, a cultural code, stature, and color are indicated for all currently accepted species. The several dozen species described since 1949 are included within this conspectus.

Authors and details of publication are provided for natural hybrids and for many artificial hybrids resulting from crosses of legitimate species; parentage is indicated as well.

An extensive outline of the genus from subgenera to varieties is presented and includes a detailed synopsis of subdivisional characters. Authorities and publication data for all subdivisions are also included.

Fifty-six line drawings prepared from herbarium specimens represent the broad spectrum of forms that have evolved within the genus.

Chapters are devoted to the taxonomic history of the genus, its origins, and distribution. Other chapters treat cultivation of particular species or groups, growing primulas from seed, and pests and diseases.

This book is completed by an extensive bibliography that includes both botanical and horticultural works. It provides a unified reference to the most important horticultural and systematic contributions to the genus *Primula* since the appearance of Smith and Fletcher's monograph.

Pp. i-iv, 1-186 (plus indexes to subjects and to scientific names and authorities) 8" x 10", hardbound on archival quality paper; 56 line drawings, 1 black and white photograph; published at \$40.00. Available from the American Rock Garden Society Bookstore and other major distributors of horticultural and botanical books (outside the U.S.A. from Wheldon & Wesley, Ltd. Codicote, Hitchin, Herts. SG4 8TE, England).

ISBN 0-935868-24-0.