

Primroses

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PRIMROSES

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ON THE COVER

Primula x Juliana 'Gina' in Marie Skonberg's garden is one of her favorites. See page 2.

Photos by M. Skonberg



See article on page 2.

'Jeanne Penshaw' is a vigorous *P. x Juliana* that originated in Alaska.



Tibetan bells - *P. waltonii* - in Marie Skonberg's garden.

My Favorite Primroses

by Marie Skonberg, Ouzinkie, Alaska

Every gardener has plants that are special, either because of the fond association with the person who gave it to you, or the effort you took to get or grow it.

Marie Skonberg has taken the time to describe a few of her favorites. She has sent some photographs she took so she, and APS readers, could remember and enjoy them year round.

P. x Juliana (acaulis type) This is one of my best primulas. It is very hardy with a creeping rootstalk and many blossoms. This very old form has been in our family gardens at least 40 years. It is very special to me because my Aunt Katy generously gave me starts.

P. x Juliana 'Gina' (Cover photo) This is a late blooming crimson Jack-in-the-Green in miniature. It has the bronzy foliage, luxurious sheen and tiny eye of a 'Cowichan'. The creeping rootstalk of *P. juliae* makes this one an exceptional delight in the garden. The plant was purchased from Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery.

P. elatior and King Alfred daffodils tell me that spring is here. The pale yellow flowers with orange eyes are on strong stems that our windy conditions won't flatten. It is an exceptionally lovely primrose grown from APS seed.

P. x auricula, double This colorful delight of purple and yellow is a striking addition to my garden from Herb Dickson's double auricula seed. It sets many offsets, blooms consistently double and is one of my favorites.

P. x Juliana 'Jeanne Renshaw' This vigorous small-leaved Juliana with pink blossoms originated in Juneau, Alaska. It is one of the first to bloom in the spring and has the typical *P. juliae* creeping rootstalk. The plant was a generous gift from John O'Brien, Sr., from Juneau.

Primula waltonii has sweetly scented, purple to rose-colored bell-shaped blossoms covered with farina. They make this primrose my favorite of the Sikkimensis Section. You are instantly drawn to these beautiful bells of Tibet. The plants illustrated were grown from APS seed. ❖

Photo by M. Skonberg



This yellow Juliana primrose with creeping root stalk was given to Marie by her Aunt Katy and has been in her family's garden in Alaska for over 40 years.

Living Soil: Primula's Perfect Environment

by Mary Kordes, Ahmeek, Michigan

Are you planning to break new ground to make yet another garden, or to expand your existing one? Perhaps you need to redo your garden, lift and divide your plants, regroup for a better design, or add new plants.

Most of your plant "actors" have given their auditions, but have you thought of their stage? The very foundation of your garden, the stage that will support your entire show, is your soil. It will provide the home and food source for perhaps the lifetime of each and every plant in your cast.

Every soil can use a boost to at least replenish the organic matter. The soil micro-organisms, those "good little guys" who populate our soils, eat constantly as they turn that organic matter into humus and usable plant food.

HUMIFICATION

The word humus has become a catchall encompassing any organic material we add to our soil but, unless these materials are partially digested to put them in an advanced stage of decomposition, they are correctly labeled organic matter. Through the process of humification, organic matter eventually decomposes to the very finest of particles and only then become humus.

It is the wondrous world of living micro-organisms within our soil that breaks down organic matter during humification. There are millions of them in each spoonful of soil -- from bacteria, yeasts, fungi and others, on to the tiniest one-celled protozoa.

As each organism family eats once-living organic matter in its varying stages of decomposition, it is linked to the next family in the chain of interdependent micro-organisms.

The completion of the life cycle of one family group signals the beginning of another family's uniquely specialized task. Humification finally, through consumption and digestion by these microorganisms and through chemical processes, reduces the organic matter to simple elements.

The organic matter is actually recycled back to a soluble chemical form that is suspended in the cohesion water surrounding soil particles so it can be taken up by our plants as food. And all the nutrients stored in the tissues of that organic matter once again become plant food. It's a marvelous cycle that ensures continued life on earth as all of our nourishment, for plants and animals alike, begins within our soil.

MINERAL NUTRIENTS

Acids produced through the carbon dioxide released by soil bacteria during the process of humification also play a key role in plant nutrition. These acids dissolve minerals in the inorganic components of soil, the mineral rock particles that make up all soils, to make these minerals available to plants through the soil water.

As the humus content in our soils is consumed and depleted, the number of micro-organisms it can support decreases and the production of available plant food slows. Humus does eventually reach a point where



Living Soil continued

it no longer contains reusable plant food.

Therefore, the organic matter in our soil must continually be replenished to assure a healthy, active micro-organism community.

Also, adding fresh organic materials to the soil stimulates soil bacteria and hastens the decomposition and nutrient release of humus already in the soil.

SOIL STRUCTURE

These soil organisms need humus for another reason, too, namely good soil structure. This means a soil that is loose and fluffy enough to allow free movement of air and with enough organic matter to retain moisture. Humus is the stuff that builds good soil structure and is the critical component for the soil organisms to recycle with maximum efficiency. Our soil friends also need warmth for stimulation so they are most active when the soil is warmed by the sun.

Loam soil consists of a balance of clay, sand and humus and is the ideal soil for most plants. Not many of us are lucky enough to be gardening in loam, but we can amend our soil to make loam.

Organic matter serves to loosen and lighten heavy clay soils. You should also add quantities of a sharp sand/smaller gravel mixture to spread apart the fine clay particles, thus opening it for better drainage and aeration. Be careful not to work clay soils when they are wet as this will destroy the soil structure and lead to compaction.

Sandy soil, on the other hand, needs plenty of organic matter to absorb and hold any moisture that falls upon it. The addition of some clay soil to the sandy soil also greatly improves texture and nutrient exchange. I am lucky enough to have clay at hand to add to the thin, somewhat sandy, acid soil in some of my gardens. The finer clay particles serve to hold the soil together

and also collect more moisture as each particle is coated with a thin film of cohesion water.

Black, crumbly compost and aged animal manures add wonderful fiber to your soil for texture and moisture retention and they contain nutrients. Spent mushroom compost is another excellent source.

Sphagnum peat moss is readily available at garden centers, and is one of the most-used soil conditioners. It is slower to break down than most fibers, so doesn't add nutrients as readily as do other organic materials. Peat moss must always be dampened before mixing with your soil. I prefer to add hot water to a pail or plastic bag partially full of peat moss, then stir and knead it with my hands until it is damp enough to hold together in a loose ball without being soggy.

COMPOSTING

Organic matter in its rough, predigested state is the very best conditioner we can add to soil. There is no need to compost it first, though we do compost surplus plant residue. Work the materials into the soil or simply tuck them under your mulch so the "good little guys" can begin their work. The soil organisms will chomp on them with gusto to reduce them to minuscule particles. You won't lose an iota of the nutrients those organic materials contain as can happen when composting. There will be no leaching to runoff or to the atmosphere, and all the goodness in the materials will go right back into the soil to feed your plants.

Chopping the organic materials to small, but not compacted, particles affords more surfaces for the soil microorganisms to attack and speeds recycling to usable plant food. If you don't have a shredder, chop your organic materials with your lawn mower.

Rake the materials, including all the leaves you can collect in the fall, into wind rows and run over them with your lawn mower. Repeat the process until they are chopped to as fine a texture as can easily be handled.

Plant trimmings, grass clippings, weeds, leaves, sawdust, wood chips or bark, corn cobs, seed hulls, seaweed, and even human and animal hair combings are just some of the valuable sources of organic matter. But one word of caution: don't use any plant residue that has been treated with a herbicide, as it may affect the plants you want to feed.

I also frown upon grass clippings containing dandelion blossoms as their seeds continue to develop even after cutting, and I am sick of pulling healthy dandelion plants out of the gardens! By all means, don't recycle quack grass. Those beautiful long, white roots, even when chopped, will grow and grow.

Though all organic materials are rich, nutrient values do vary. The type of organic matter, and what nutrients and minerals it originally used to grow, will determine benefits received. So it's back to the adage, "Variety is the spice of life." Don't waste a scrap of any plant residue. Shove it right back into the soil to begin that wondrous cycle once again.

NITROGEN SOURCES

Since nitrogen found in the protein of organic materials is the most important food of soil micro-organisms, I like to add a dusting of an extra rich nitrogenous source along with the organic materials to stimulate those organisms and get them working. Aged manure (never add fresh manure as it is too "hot" and will burn plants), blood meal, and fish meal are high in protein. But don't confuse protein in organic matter with the protein we derive from meat. No unprocessed meat product should ever be added to either a compost pile or your garden as it will surely attract rodents and other scavengers.

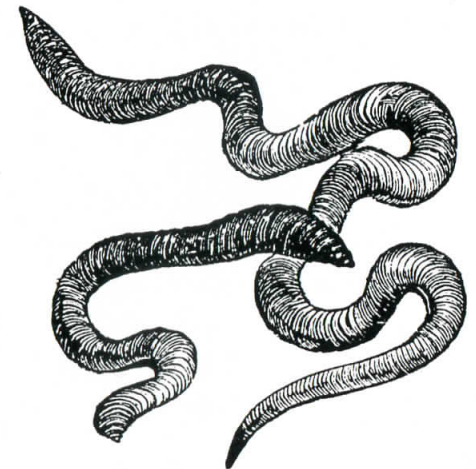
Earth worms, too, will swarm in to enjoy the organic feast in your garden. They drag those wonderful organic particles down deep into the soil, creating tunnels as they go. Those tunnels are the magic roads to soil aeration, as fresh air seeps through them to provide the soil organisms and plant roots with needed oxygen.

The best time for us to feed our soils is when preparing a bed for planting, as the soil can be deeply and thoroughly worked without disturbing plant roots. Alternatively, add more organic matter to soils at any time, working it into the soil between plants, or just by adding mulch and letting the earth worms carry it down into the soil.

SPECIAL ADDITIVES

Even loamy soil needs further amending to keep different plant families happy. Most of our primulas, for example, need extra organic matter for moisture retention. Auriculas require an extra portion of coarse sand and gravel to mimic the soil of their mountain origin and facilitate faster drainage.

Beyond improving soil texture, soils can be deficient in nutrients. It is a good idea to take soil samples in your garden, then either test them with a soil test kit from your garden center or, for more in-depth scrutiny, go to your local State University Cooperative Extension office (if you live in the U.S.A.). They will advise you on the proper method for taking the sample and,



Living Soil continued

after they analyze it, will supply you with a rundown of what your soil needs. A small fee is charged for this service.

The term pH refers to a soil's acidity or alkalinity. pH 7 is considered neutral on the pH scale. Soil organisms are happiest at pH 7, when the most plant foods are suspended in the soil water. Numbers higher than 7 indicate an alkaline soil, while lower numbers become increasingly acidic. Some soil organisms will be less active in either an acidic or alkaline soil. Therefore, certain nutrients will be lacking under these conditions, but that soil will still provide a perfect environment for particular plants.

Most plants, including the majority of our primulas, prefer a slightly acid soil. The addition of peat moss or cottonseed meal, if necessary, helps supply that acidity.

But most primulas of the section *Auricula* require a more alkaline soil and may need a little lime, bone meal or wood ashes added to most soils to supply the calcium they crave. A mulch of crushed oyster shells also sweetens the soil as they slowly decompose.

None of the food we give our plants can be used by them until it has been reduced to its original chemical form and suspended in the cohesion water that surrounds soil particles. Amending our soils with organic materials is the best assurance that soil bacteria will thrive and the chemical exchanges takes place to produce healthy soil and plants.

When your soil amendments have been made, there should be no further need to disturb the soil until you have to lift and divide your primulas. In fact, it is far kinder to the micro-

organisms who live in the soil not to destroy their community structure by cultivating your soil.

If necessary, aeration of soil can be accomplished by merely pushing a garden fork or small fork-like hand tool into the soil and gently wiggling it back and forth without actually lifting out the soil.

MULCH

I like the unifying appearance of a 2-3 inch chopped leaf mulch on all of my gardens. It becomes a rich brown color and does an excellent job of suppressing weeds. Grass clippings are also good; they age to a lighter shade of brown.

I have found that mulch retains soil moisture, but I must still be careful to water the gardens thoroughly, especially in dry spells. The mulch will absorb the moisture like a sponge and, unless enough water is applied, the underlying soil can become bone dry.

This is especially true when gardening under trees. The tree roots tend to grow into the rich garden soil in search of both nutrients and moisture and will sap the soil leaving little for plants.

Careful attention to watering is also important to microbial activity. Dry soil slows the process of humification by soil organisms, resulting in few nutrients available to plants.

In summary, organic matter within the soil will regulate the moisture content and maintain an open soil for good drainage and air exchange. It will provide food for beneficial soil micro-organisms and, ultimately, for our plants. Also, an organic mulch preserves soil moisture and provides food for earth worms and soil organisms while keeping plant roots cooler in the heat of the summer.

Now that your soil is rich in humus, your stage has been properly constructed. It's time to call in your cast of plant actors and get on with the show! ❖

Book Review

by Rex Murfitt, Victoria, B. C.

APS member Norman Singer has brought this book to fellow members' attention. He and book author, Geoffrey Charlesworth, garden in Massachusetts, where even the lowly primula, not specifically mentioned in this book, are given some space, I know, from conversation. (See Norman Singer's report on APS seed growing in the Fall, 1994, issue of the quarterly.)

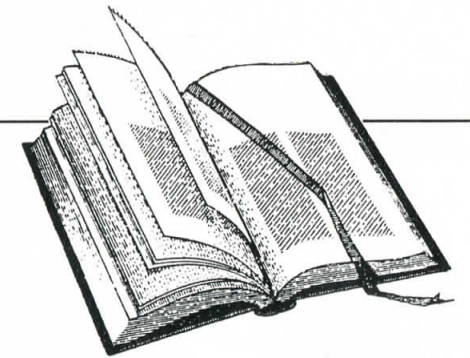
A Gardener Obsessed; Observations, Reflections and Advice for Other Dedicated Gardeners.

Geoffrey B. Charlesworth
244 pp. illus. 1994
David R. Godine, Pub. Inc. \$24.95

This book is a new collection of witty, informative and knowledgeable essays that offer advice to the expert and beginner alike. In his introduction, the author reminds us that gardening is fun, serious fun possibly, but at the same time provides relief from life's many problems.

Many readers will know Geoffrey Charlesworth's main interest lies in his New England rock garden. He has pursued this hobby for many years and is a recognized authority on the subject, sharing his experiences through his writing and many lectures and talks. A very active member in several garden clubs, he donates his skills in various offices. He has been writing helpful and amusing articles for a long time, including his earlier book, **The Opinionated Gardener**. His many contributions have been recognized with an impressive array of awards.

So here we have a book about rock gardening, written by an acknowledged expert living in Massachusetts, and addressed to other dedicated gardeners. What of those of us who deem ourselves, dare I say, beginners living far from New England? Is this book for us?



A quick flip through the pages will reveal lots of Latin names of legendary alpine plants, together with lovely color pictures showing carpets of bright flowers and fascinating portraits of individual alpine plants. This may well intimidate, but after reading the first few pages, expert and beginner will be caught up in the appeal of the topics. There are essays that prepare prospective garden makers for the many pitfalls that await the over-anxious; others point out those so obvious mistakes most of us have made. Furthermore, the author will personally guide you down the many avenues where gardening will easily lead you.

Readers will be further prepared to recognize and deal with the obsessions that can befall a serious gardener. As for those dreaded Latin names, why not have a book on rock plants beside you as you read and check out the odd name? This will add enormously to your enjoyment. There is no hurry to finish the book. It was not written to be hurried and the sooner you come to grips with Latin names, the sooner you master them.

To gardeners with several years experience under their belts, I guarantee hours of enjoyable reading as you follow Mr. Charlesworth through his thoughts, ideas and observations. Be prepared to recognize yourself — not to mention your gardening friends — in many of the situations.

This is not a how-to-do-it book. It was not intended to be. None the less, you will gain many valuable gardening lessons, both practical and philosophical. ❖

Photo by Orval Agee

A Tribute

Thank You, Anita!

Anita Alexander recently resigned as APS historian, a position she had held for several years. This tribute is not only for her work in preserving the archives for the society, but also for her staunch support of APS through the years. It is difficult to find a person who has expended the time and energy supporting an organization as has Anita.

Aside from her work as historian, Anita served as APS editor from 1964 to 1968. She was president of the society from 1977 to 1978 and is a certified primrose show judge.



Anita Alexander at Barnhaven.

The Alexander property near Boring, Oregon encompasses 70 acres of woodland and includes a creek that provides perfect sites for bog and woodland plants. Growing species for the sake of doing it was never a priority for Anita. Her objective was to hybridize strains to increase color range and to improve form and hardiness. Primula growers will know her work in developing magnificent color forms of candelabras, known as 'Pagoda Hybrids'.

Anita's first order from Barnhaven was made in the 1940s. That introduction led to a lifelong friendship with Florence Bellis and work in hybridizing double acaulis.

Her enthusiasm for primroses and her friendship with Rae Berry led Anita to become a founding board member of the

Berry Botanic Garden in Portland. She served as its vice-president for two years and as the Primula Committee chairman for several years. During her tenure, the primula collection at the Berry Garden grew to become the finest in the area.

Although the Alexanders have reduced the size of their garden, a new garden surrounding their solar home and greenhouse has been constructed. Naturally, this new area contains a few sheltered nooks for primulas of the Vernales section and a small bog for her special candelabra hybrids.

For all these accomplishments, the American Primrose Society owes a debt of gratitude to Anita Alexander.

Thank you compiled by Thelma Genheimer and Ann Lunn. ❖

Primula prenantha, P. gemmifera and P. pinnatifida

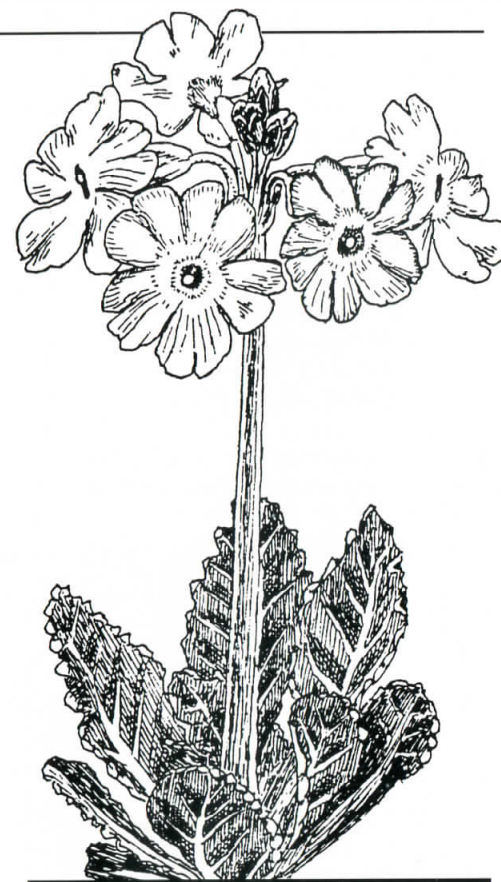
by Ian D. Scott, Fife, Scotland

Two growers in Scotland, Ian Scott and John Mattingley, have had some success with wild primula seed collected on expeditions. Here's an update.

The problem about putting something unusual into a seed exchange is that you immediately get letters requesting cultivation details. As no two areas are climatically identical I usually respond by telling the correspondent to use the same conditions that have been successful for their other primula seeds. In some ways, however, this is not very helpful. It doesn't relay the information gained by trial and error, which may be of use. So please accept this article as a general description of our cultivation methods, and not as a formula for guaranteed success.

Our first two attempts to grow *Primula prenantha* from seed were complete failures. Afterwards we were told by Jim Jermyn at Edrom that germination can be very erratic and that even he had problems keeping the species going from year to year. Buying plants was not much better. In retrospect it was a mistake to keep them in the greenhouse (rule number one: most primulas hate greenhouses), but they looked so very vulnerable out in the open garden. Both plants died within the month.

A year later we purchased a second batch of plants, which were planted out on the shaded north side of our rhododendron island. Perhaps the EMAK clone (from seed collected on the Edinburgh Makalu Expedition) is more vigorous than previous collections, and so accounts for its ability to thrive there. After two years this small candelabra has formed nice clumps and produces whorls of delicate, small, yellow hanging bells for several weeks in early summer. Many plants have two super-imposed whorls and the plants readily produce viable



Primula geurmifera, line drawing by Dr. L. J. Bacon. Reproduced by permission from *Asiatic Primulas* by Roy Green, Alpine Garden Society, 1976. p. 22.

seed. We surface-sow the seed into a peat-based compost either in the autumn or in late February, and then transplant into 1/2 ounce or about 1 tablespoon (15 ml.) modules at the three-leaf stage.

Primula prenantha continued

A species that we expected to be difficult and proved otherwise, is *P. gemmifera*. We were given small seedlings in the spring of 1993. As the species grows along stream banks and on wet rocks, we left the plants standing in water all summer. In mid-autumn they were transferred to the stock bed and covered with a dutch light. The stock bed has a two-inch layer of coarse sand at the bottom which is kept moist. This allows water to get to the roots by capillary action, while keeping the leaves and other vegetation fairly dry. This, we have found, is a good method of over-wintering difficult species such as *PP. reidii*, *primulina*, *klattii* (*uniflora*) and *flaccida*. One reason for plant loss seems to be that the dormant crowns rot if they become wet and then get frosted.

In early spring, when the dutch lights were removed, the plants put on rapid growth and flowered while the plants were still small. They also set seed by early summer and were flowering a second time by the autumn. The plants look similar to *P. involucrata* except that



Coarsely toothed leaves and hanging bells identify Primula prenantha.

the leaves are toothed and reflexed, there are no "pouches" beneath the bracts, and the flowers are pale blue in comparison to the purple-tinged *P. involucrata* or its pink subspecies *P. yargongensis*. Unfortunately, most photographic film distorts the color and makes the flowers appear to be deep pink.

In the spring of 1994, we were given seed from the Kunming-Gothenberg Botanical Expedition to China (KGB). This was sown without any special attention in early March and gave an excellent germination. In fact, it is hard to see why the species has been out of cultivation. In winter the roots disintegrate to some degree and spring growth arises from these remains so that a clumping effect soon takes place. We have also noticed that in late summer many of the plants have secondary growth coming from their surface roots, rather in the manner of *P. wollastonii*. Obviously, this has potential as an additional method of propagation.

The third plant that you might be unfamiliar with is *P. pinnatifida*. This is quite distinct among the muscarioid primulas with its deeply-toothed leaves and small flower head. Germination is quite straightforward so long as the seed is surface sown and kept moist. The problems start with keeping the slugs away and trying to produce seed.

Slugs I will not comment on, except to suggest that with some slug pellets, the attractant seems to last longer than the poisonous effect. Since we stopped using them, and simply removed slugs by hand once in a while, the problem of slug damage has diminished considerably.

Obtaining viable seed is a more difficult problem to overcome. Flower color is quite variable, ranging from blue through purple to pale pink and even white. Trying to select different color strains by hand pollination is difficult, and we have only achieved good seed production when there have been colonies of at least a dozen plants flowering together. On the other hand, we have found that the species forms clumps after two years growth that can be split up quite easily. ❖

Primrose Notes

by Dan Pederson, Tacoma, Washington

This issue's notes are on auriculas. Dan Pederson has been growing auriculas only for the last three years, but with good results, as indicated by the prize bench at the Tacoma shows. Here are some notes on the method that works for him.

Soil Mix: I mix the following ingredients in a 20 gallon galvanized trash can:

5 gal. Sunshine Mix No. 1
4 gal. pumice
2 gal. leaf mould
a handful of bone meal
a handful of Osmacote

Sowing Seed: I use the "bag method." To start, fill the bottom of a three and one-half inch pot

with a half-inch of pumice for drainage. Fill the rest of the pot with the mix as noted above to within a quarter-inch of the top. Tap pot on bench to settle. Fill the remaining space at the top with pumice.

Sow the seed evenly over the surface, tapping the pot again to anchor the seed. Take care not to cover the seed. Auricula seed needs daylight to germinate.

Water the seed pot by soaking it in a tub of water. A plastic cat litter tub works fine. After about an hour, remove and let drain. Place four pots in a one gallon Zip-lock plastic bag, label the outside with a permanent marker. Include the name and date. Place outdoors in a sheltered area.

Photo by Dan Pederson



Auriculas and primulas in Dan Pederson's alpine house.

Primrose Notes continued

After germination starts, open bags. Or, if no sign of germination, bring in to a cold frame and open bag. Germination should soon happen. Grow on in these pots for a while.

Pot Size: *Do not overpot seedlings.* Seedlings should be moved gradually up to three and a half-inch pots. Start with two and a quarter-inch pots, two auricula seedlings to a pot. Auriculas appreciate the warmer soil in a smaller pot. Smaller pots also prevent over watering, as they dry out faster.

Watering: Learn to water by weight of the pot and where it is situated. Get to know how heavy a pot of your standard mix is when wet through. A plant will show you when to water, too.

Remember, auriculas have two main growing periods, spring and autumn, and two resting

periods, summer and winter. The plant is much more active in the two cool seasons. It prefers to rest in the two seasons of extreme temperatures.

Feeding: Around late February, or when the plant begins to wake from its winter rest, begin to feed with a half-strength high nitrogen feed for four to six weeks or until you see the tiny flower buds forming. At this point, switch to a high potash food, again half-strength. This encourages larger and brighter blooms.

Continue with the potash feeding as the buds begin to swell and show color, then stop. Repeat with the potash feeding a couple of times in autumn. This will slow the growth and feed the following year's flower buds and strengthen the plant as it goes into its resting period.

Good luck! ❖

Photo by Dan Pederson



Covered winter storage for plants and seed pots at Dan Pederson's.

Plant Portrait

Report by Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

PRIMULA CHIONANTHA

[*G. chion-* snow; *G. -antha* flower.]

"Snow Flower" is an appropriate epithet for *Primula chionantha* with its china white flowers and liberal dusting of farina. It is a regal, sophisticated plant that virtually commands attention in a cool, shady corner of the garden.

George Forrest discovered this species on the Chungtien Plateau of Yunnan in the early 1900s. Now, however, there is some controversy surrounding its taxonomy. Fenderson lists *P. chionantha* as a species separate from *PP. sinopurpurea*, *sinoplaginea* and *melanops*. Halda chooses to describe it as only a white-flowered form of *P. sinopurpurea*. Unlike the previous two authors, Richards lumps all together as *P. chionantha* and relegates to subspecies status *PP. sinopurpurea*, *sinoplaginea*, *melanops* and *brevicula*. He concludes that *P. chionantha* ssp. *chionantha* and *P. chionantha* ssp. *sinopurpurea* differ only in flower color. All authors agree that the plant is a member of the section *Crystalloplomis*.

Whatever its name, it is a truly stately plant. The umbels of nodding, creamy white flowers emit a sweet fragrance. The stems rise about twenty inches above golden-farinosed, strap shaped leaves.

In the wild, *P. chionantha* grows in rich, humusy soil among grasses or perennials along streams. It is often found growing among the roots of wild rhubarb at 10,000 to 15,000 feet.

In the garden, *P. chionantha* prefers a cool, sheltered place in rich, water-retentive soil. Some authors recommend placing it in a bog garden or peat bed where moisture levels remain high, particularly during the summer. In areas of high winter rainfall, it is best to improve the drainage of the soil before planting.

It grows easily from seed, sometime flowering the first year. Since the seedlings are somewhat sensitive to transplant shock, good root systems should be allowed to develop before carefully disturbing the seedlings.

The plants are self-fertile and will set abundant seed. *P. chionantha* will readily hybridize with *PP. sinopurpurea*, *sinoplaginea* and *melanops*.

Division of large plants should be done in the fall; in milder climates this procedure can be delayed until the winter months when they are dormant. After separating, the crowns should not be allowed to dry out.

To light up a shady corner of the garden, there is no better plant than *P. chionantha*. It will reflect the sunlight like freshly fallen snow!

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This Plant Portrait is submitted by the Oregon Primrose Society in lieu of a chapter activity report. Meeting times for the Chapter are listed with Chapter News. See color photo on page 32. ❖



Under the Overhang

by Rick Lupp

SIX DWARF PRIMULAS FOR THE ALPINE HOUSE OR TROUGH

A few words about six marvelous miniature hybrid primulas which remain rather little known in America although they have long been grown and admired by European gardeners.

The first, and probably best known of the group, is *P. x berninae* 'Windrush'. *Primula x berninae* is a fertile hybrid of *P. latifolia* and *P. hirsuta* which occur over a rather wide area of the west central Alps on the borders of France and Italy. The cultivar 'Windrush' was grown from seed in the early 1920s by Paul Rosenheim. It is a very compact form with large pink-purple flowers and is a very floriferous, easily grown primula. It is a perfect candidate for pot and trough culture where it appreciates part sun and good drainage.

Primula 'Pink Ice' is a vigorous hybrid of *P. allionii* x *P. pubescens* 'Harlow Car'. This is the perfect choice for the grower who wants the perfection of form and beauty of *P. allionii* without all the difficulties. This plant is compact, strong growing and buried under a bloom of large, crystalline pink flowers for several weeks in spring. It should not be confused with the *P. allionii* cultivar 'Pink Ice'.

Primula 'Beatrice Wooster' is an intentional, artificial hybrid of the same cross as one which has been found several times in nature. In this case, the cross was *P. allionii* x *P. marginata* 'Linda Pope'. The resultant plant is one of neat, dwarf habit and produces a heavy bloom of pink

flowers with a white eye. This is another easy choice for pot culture.

I think the easiest to please and most satisfactory *P. allionii* hybrid that I grow is *P. allionii* x *P. villosa*. This is a wonderful little compact mound of slightly viscid, bronze foliage with a mass of stemless rich violet-purple blooms with a prominent white eye. This hybrid often produces a worthwhile fall bloom as well as its spring extravaganza.

One of my favorite dwarf primula hybrids is *P. x loiseleuri* 'Lismore Yellow', reportedly a cross between a white form of *P. allionii* x *P. auricula* raised from seed by Mrs. J.A. Burrow. The plant has foliage which is larger and less sticky than *P. allionii* and remains an attractive dark-green year round with a strong bloom of soft yellow flowers in spring. This one is easily grown and soon forms a large plant.

The brightest colored bloom of the six primula discussed in this article belongs to *P. 'Ethel Barker'*. This is a very free flowering hybrid of *P. allionii* x *P. hirsuta* with rather long, down-covered foliage held on long petioles. The foliage mound is very compact and light green. Stunning blooms of deep, carmine-red with a white eye will stop you in your tracks when you see a well grown plant. The plant was grown from seed by Mr. Frank Barker in the 1930s and is still one of the best hybrids around.

Give some of these beauties a try and brighten your late winter and early spring show in the alpine house or cold frame!

See color photo on page 17. ❖

Primula allionii in Yorkshire

by John N. Gibson, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, England

Primula allionii is a very variable species found in only two areas of the Maritime Alps between Nice on the French Riviera and Cuneo in Northwest Italy near the Col de Tende.

In nature it grows at altitudes from 2300 to 6230 feet (700 to 1900 meters) on hard limestone cliffs, often under overhanging rock. I do not intend this short article to be technical, as the botanical details have already been well documented. Instead I hope to create some interest in a very rewarding species.

Anyone who reads this and the article by Rick Lupp in *Primroses*, Winter, 1994 will realize just how accommodating these gems are.

I bought my first two plants many years ago from Hartside Nursery Garden. When I picked up the plants Mr. Huntley, the proprietor, asked if I knew how to grow them. I told him that I grew auriculas and had read how to treat *P. allionii*. I am convinced that had my answer been unfavourable he would not have sold them to me. They thrived and I was hooked.

CULTIVATION

In spite of many authors saying how difficult they are to grow, I have never found that to be the case. My garden is in a southwest-facing Pennine valley about 560 feet (170 meters) above sea level. It is surrounded by large mature trees, and in summer, the greenhouse only gets about six hours of direct sunlight a day. The greenhouse door has had the glass replaced with chicken wire to keep birds and cats out and let as much air in as possible. The windows are only closed during snowstorms.

From mid-April until late September the sides and roof are lined with a fine white plastic mesh for shade and to keep out bees and other pollinating insects. The temperature varies from 15 to 110 degrees Fahrenheit over the year. I am sure that the plants could cope with

lower temperatures but I would not like to say how much heat they could stand.

REPOTTING

Repotting is usually done in late June using a very gritty compost in clay pots. My compost consists of two parts John Innes No. 2 (see *Primroses*, Spring, 1994) and one part granite grit. The pot is top dressed with half an inch of grit which keeps the base of the plant clear of the compost. The pots are then plunged up to the rims in a bed of coarse sand of the type used in concrete. This serves two purposes: it insulates the pots and the roots from rapid changes in temperature both in summer and winter; and it makes watering a lot easier.

There is no need to water between the end of November and the beginning of February as there is enough moisture in the sand. When the summer holiday is taken, the sand and the pots are given a good soaking and the plants are quite happy for two weeks.

The pots are rotated a quarter of a turn every Sunday. This ensures that the cushion flowers evenly all the way round. Unlike most growers, I am never in a hurry to remove the dead leaves provided that they are dry and free from botrytis. My theory is that the cushion is made from the dead foliage. If there are any dead leaves still visible just before flowering, they are carefully removed.

In my opinion, the most crucial time in the *P. allionii* year is when the flowers begin to die. It is very important to remove every dead flower as they are very susceptible to botrytis. I never give any supplementary feed, having learned from experience that it only produces large leaves at the expense of the flowers.

continued on page 18

Photo by J. Gibson



See article
on page 15.

Primula allionii
in top show form.

Photo by J. Gibson



John Gibson's bench of *Primula allionii* in full flower.

Photo by J. Lunn



Marvelous miniature
primula, *P. berninae*
'Windrush' does well
in troughs. See
'Under the Overhang
on page 14.

Primula allionii 'Mrs. Dyas'

'Mrs. Dyas' is a late-flowering form with small star-shaped flowers. It is a thrum. It gives a good account of itself at the later shows, where sometimes the only competition is another specimen of the same form.

The name, 'Mrs. Dyas', is incorrect and only came into general use when a certain nurseryman decided that it would sell better if it had a name. In the past, it has masqueraded under several aliases including 'Show Form' and 'Stubbs Variety'.

The true identity was only revealed when someone sent a piece to Mrs. Margaret Earle, who is the acknowledged expert on *Primula allionii*. In her collection is a form collected by the late Dr. Guiseppi in the Maritime Alps. It is identical in every way and is obviously the same plant. Mrs. Earle has had her plant since before the Second World War. To avoid confusion, I and other growers now use the name of the plant in Mrs. Earle's collection. John Gibson

Photo by J. Gibson



From the Slide Librarian

A new program is available from Slide Librarian John O'Brien, Sr. which can be accessed by APS members and chapters.

AURICULAS

A slide program about those hardy members of the primrose family that originated in the Alps. Considerable interest has developed in the hybrid show auricula over the last few years. Show auriculas are featured in this program with some slides from England

In addition, the following programs are available:

AMERICAN PRIMROSE SOCIETY SLIDE PROGRAM

Eighty slides of a variety of primroses in gardens and in flower arrangements, with a four-page narrative accompaniment.

WILD AND TAME PRIMULAS IN ALASKA

A video and slide program. The video is Tass Kelso's program "Yankee Doodle Dandy" on

native American primula from the "Primula Worldwide" symposium. The slides show native primula in Alaska, followed by many beautiful scenes of primroses in Alaskan gardens.

TALL, MID-SUMMER BLOOMING PRIMROSES

The *Proliferae* and *Sikkimensis* sections, including the fragrant *Primula florindae* and *P. alpicola* are featured.

Please send the date for which you need the program and a check or money order for \$10 made out to the APS Slide Library. Return the program within two weeks. Your postage cost will also be about \$10 to return the material.

If you have a special request for the slide librarian, don't hesitate to write to:

John O'Brien, Sr.
APS Slide Librarian
9450 Herbert Place
Juneau, AK 99801 ❖

Primula allionii in Yorkshire

continued from page 15

the sand on the bench and 90 percent of them root. Growing from seed is more difficult. The seed does not ripen until November or December and the seed pods are difficult to find. For that reason I only pollinate small plants. The seed is sown as soon as it is ripe in a soil-based seed compost. It is then kept in the same conditions as the plants, i.e., no heat. The seedlings are ready to transplant in May, but great care must be taken not to damage the tiny roots.

The only pests that they suffer from are root aphids, but they are easily controlled with a systemic insecticide. Botrytis can be troublesome, but I find that a systemic fungicide usually stops that. I use systemics because I like to keep the plants dry.

I must stress that while these methods work well for me, others may have to modify them to suit their own particular environment. ❖

Washington State Chapter National Show

April 8 & 9, 1995 - South Center Pavilion

1995 Show Dates



Washington State Chapter, National Show:
April 8 & 9 - South Center Pavilion

Oregon Primrose Society and Valley Hi Chapter: No show

Tacoma Chapter:
April 1 & 2 - Lakewood Mall

Eastside Chapter: No show

B.C. Primula Group:
April 22 & 23 - Southlands Nursery, Vancouver, B.C.

Alaska Primrose Group:
May Plant Sale - Juneau/Douglas area, Alaska

Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Society:
April 21 & 22 - St. Mary's Church Hall, Victoria, B.C.

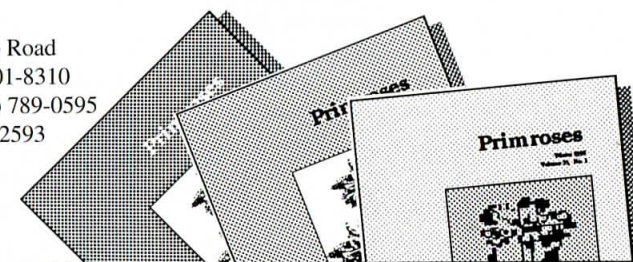
Good Reading

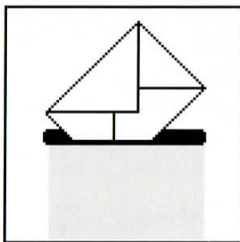
There is a gold mine of *Primula* information to be found in past issues of the quarterly. Read articles with secrets of *Primula* success by some of the foremost growers and APS members: Florence Bellis, Rae Berry, Ivy Agee.

Learn about the origins of some of the *Juliana* hybrids and show auriculas. See photographs of many rare species. Travel on journeys to see *Primulas* in their native habitats. Complete your collection of **Primroses**!

Back issues of **Primroses** are now available. For availability and prices, contact:

Ceryl Fluck
17275 Lena Loop Road
Juneau, AK 99801-8310
Telephone: (907) 789-0595
FAX: (907) 789-2593





From the Mailbox

Letters from our readers

September, 1994
Dear Editor,

Just a note to say how much I have enjoyed the journals of the APS I have received to date. I have also enjoyed very much the letters from my APS "twin."

Regarding the piece in the **Primroses**, Spring, 1994, "In the News," Florence Bellis and the Barnhaven primroses were also mentioned by Carol Klien this last spring on "Gardeners' World," a very popular television program here. I also managed to say quite a lot about Florence and the Barnhaven and Elizabethan primroses in the shade episode of Channel Four's program "Over the Garden Wall." Another short article I wrote has been published in National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens (NCCPG) area journals and caused quite a lot of interest.

Primroses, Summer, 1994, "Plant Portrait" mentions the difficulty in finding *Primula heucherifolia*. When John Richards visited my garden last April, as part of the NCCPG Primula Weekend, we were talking about the species primroses I grew. I happened to mention *Primula heucherifolia*. I had gotten seed from the Alpine Garden Society. Mr. Richards said that I could not have *Primula heucherifolia* as it was not in cultivation. It would be wonderful if the real *P. heucherifolia* could be found.

I am hoping to grow all the strains of Barnhaven polyanthus and primroses in my garden at Bolton Percy, Yorkshire. Currently I have about two-thirds of the catalog growing here.

With all best wishes,
Jacqueline Giles,
Bolton Percy, Yorkshire,
England

September 12, 1994
Dear Editor,

With reference to April Boettger's "Primrose Notes" in **Primroses**, Spring, 1994, where she queries whether the "chalk" referred to in the John Innes compost mixes is the same as lime — the answer is yes. Chalk is carbonate of lime and is natural quarried rock.

The "grit" referred to can be the rough particle of any rock, granite being one of the hardest and is usually one-eighth to three-eighths of an inch in size.

John Innes composts can be bought here but can be very variable in quality. The best types have the best loam content. If you can get a good source it can be very good indeed. For primulas, my preference would be to add more grit, especially for the types requiring increased drainage. Primulas requiring more moisture are better off with the peat or soil based composts.

Kind regards,
Tom McCrea,
Gwynedd, Wales, United Kingdom ❖

**The APS
Primula x 'Juliana';
Registry -
Don't Forget**

The APS Board of Directors decided at the 1992 "Primula Worldwide" symposium to establish a registry system for the identification of *Primula* x 'Juliana' hybrids, both old and new. If you raise a new variety you feel is worth naming, send for a registration form, making sure to include a photograph. Dorothy Springer, 7213 S. 15th St., Tacoma WA 98465.

Beginner's Corner

The feature column for the novice primrose grower

Q If I mulch my primrose bed in the fall, will I smother the plants?

A In nature the section *Primula* plants, which include the wild primroses of Europe, grow in grassy meadows or woodlands. They are often covered with dead grass or leaves, and seem to thrive on the added mild feeding as the dead material breaks down.

In our gardens, the plants are often modern hybrids and don't have quite the vigor, but none the less like an annual, or even semi-annual, spring and fall mulch of leaf-mould or peat. The only caution is, be sure the mulch does not get too wet and compact, or the plant may indeed rot.

And, as is always the case in a nice damp organic environment, watch out for slugs that will eat the succulent new primrose leaves for breakfast.

Q I have a problem with remembering where primroses are growing in the garden once they go dormant. I dig them up by mistake! How can I mark them unobtrusively, or what could I grow with them to remind me that there is a primrose there?

A One friend here in Victoria once told me that for her special small bulbs in her garden she always planted a low-growing thyme over top, and knew not to dig around the thyme. The same idea could be borrowed for some of the primulas that go dormant.

Primula sieboldii is one that disappears in high summer. Non-invasive perennials that grow adjacent and will cover the spot through the season but give you a clue that the *P. sieboldii* is nearby would include smaller hostas -- the specimen-type plants, not the more aggressive border types. But you still have to remember that where the hostas grow you don't cultivate vigorously!

With the smaller primroses such as the Juliana hybrids, a tidy leaf-mould mulch along the edge of a bed may act as a reminder. Or interplant with summer annuals which will grow from scattered seed, such nigella or "love-in-a-mist", which is light and airy and won't crowd out the primroses.

Q When I have several varieties of different colored primroses growing together it seems to me they revert to yellow or muddy colors. Do primroses do this?

A Modern colorful hybrid primroses and polyanthus strains have been developed by careful selection over time. Planted out in the garden and left there, they will gradually die off. In the process, they may set seed, and the genes of the hardier, wild primroses will produce yellow or muddled colors. Someone here referred to this as Mendelism -- reverting to type.

Primroses thrive on fresh soil. If you have some colors that you want to preserve, dig up the plant and replace the soil, or move the plant to a new bed every year. You might get away with two years, but three is risky.

I'm sure there are some dedicated growers who tend their plants so well they are able to keep them going in the same spot for a long period of time, but I'd bet they top-dress and freshen the soil a couple of times a year. In my more neglectful way, I'd just divide and move the plant to a fresh spot.

The answers this issue are thanks to many primrose-appreciating friends in Victoria. Maedythe Martin, Contributing Editor ❖

Board of Directors' Meeting

Held October 15, 1994 in Chehalis, Washington

This is a summary of the board meeting minutes.

Addaline Robinson submitted her treasurer's report and explained the proposed budget for the next quarter.

A proposal to increase membership was discussed. (See a summary of the approved proposal on the following page.) Additional ideas to promote APS included: John Kerridge will contact sources in Japan regarding ideas to increase Japanese membership; Cy Happy will contact Garden Writers of America; complimentary copies of **Primroses** will be sent to national gardening publications to encourage reprints of articles in national magazines. APS will take the responsibility to update society information in all reference sources. Greeting cards using APS photographs will be explored.

Washington State Chapter will host the next National Show on April 8 and 9, 1995. The location will be the South Center Pavilion, south of Seattle, Washington.

An Editorial Search Committee composed of Maedythe Martin, Karen Schellinger, June Skidmore and Ann Lunn was appointed to find a new editor.

Editor Maedythe Martin explained the fall issue will be out in early November. The Winter, 1995 issue will be typed by Ann Lunn and proof-read by Rod Deacon.

Flip Fenili, Chairman of the Nominating Committee, said that all incumbents have agreed to continue in office. John Kerridge will appoint a replacement to fill Greg Becker's unexpired term. Greg Becker has resigned due to pressures of a new business.

Slide Librarian John O'Brien, Sr. plans to provide a total of 10 primula programs. Cheryl Fluck has offered to collect old copies of **Primroses**, catalog them and distribute them when requests are made for them.

Marie Skonberg, Seed Exchange Chair, is pleased with the number of donations received. They surpass last year and include many new donors. The seed list will be mailed in December; lists will be sent first to overseas members, then to eastern, mid-western and western members in that order. Donors will be given first preference. Seeds will be fifty cents per packet with a minimum order of twelve packets for \$6.00. The Board agreed that groups, such as garden clubs and affiliated societies, may not buy seed. The seed exchange is reserved for individual members of APS.

Rosetta Jones, Judging Chair, will hold a judging demonstration at the Tacoma show April 1 and 2, 1995.

Don Keefe, Round Robin Chairman, had organized two new Robins with eight members in each. Anyone interested in joining is urged to contact Don.

Thea Oakley reported that **Hardy Primula**, by H. G. Lyall is now available.

Ellen Wilson, Advertising Manager for the quarterly, has written 10 letters to advertisers with no response. A motion to increase advertising rates to \$100 per page was approved. Ads will be paid for in advance, with billing going to the person responsible for approval and then to the Treasurer.

John Kerridge currently has the APS archives. He has found a professional archivist who will catalog those materials.

The Board agreed not to include phone and fax numbers in the membership listing.

The next meeting of the board will be held January 28, 1995 at Mary McCrank's Restaurant in Chehalis, Washington.

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Springer, Recording Secretary ❖

Increasing Membership

Attracting new members, retaining the current members and providing better service

As approved by the board, the membership proposal deals with three areas: attracting new members, retaining the current members and providing better service to the membership. The goal of the proposal is to increase the membership in APS by 15 percent by the end of 1995.

ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS

A quality brochure will be produced to circulate among botanic gardens, at garden shows and primrose shows. A list of seven botanic gardens was chosen as a trial group. If the program is successful, it will be expanded to other garden organizations.

Classified advertisements will be placed in gardening magazines. Two were chosen as trials.

In addition, reciprocal advertisements are encouraged between the APS and other gardening societies.

APS members are encouraged to put on displays at local garden shows. APS has the materials for such activities.

MINIMIZING NON-RENEWALS

A questionnaire will be sent to all individuals

who did not renew this past year asking for reasons for their non-renewal. Answers will be collated and presented to the board for consideration.

Complete new member packets will be developed. The primary goal is to include information to aid the beginner in developing an interest in primulas and in becoming successful at growing them.

PROVIDING BETTER SERVICE

Chapters should become more active in seeking out members in their area and including them in chapter activities.

The board should include members from throughout the United States, Canada and overseas in their activities.

The quarterly and seed exchange should maintain their high level of excellence. However, greater emphasis should be placed on members' needs in each activity.

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

A membership chairman will be appointed to implement the plan, to evaluate the effectiveness of each aspect of the proposal and to present a review to the board at the end of 1995. ❖

The search for a new Editor



Many thanks to the APS volunteers who offered to help with the production of the quarterly. A number of members have offered to help with typing and proof-reading. Further information and time frames will be sent to you soon.

There has still been no new coordinating editor identified, so Maedythe Martin will coordinate the spring issue. APS still needs a gardening society liaison co-ordinator to arrange reciprocal ads and journal exchange.

Any general comments or suggestions for the editor search committee are welcome. Please contact Ann Lunn, Committee Chair, 6620 NW 271st Avenue, Hillsboro, OR 97124.

CHINA BOTANICAL TRIP

The proposed trip to China that was suggested by President John Kerridge has reluctantly been postponed indefinitely due to a lack of response.

News from the Chapters

A summary of the chapter meetings

ALASKA

Programs are planned for the third Saturday of each month in January, February, March and April.

The first program of the season was on auriculas, held in Juneau on November 19, 1994. Auriculas, a hardy form of *Primula* originating in the Alps, are now found in many garden strains, and both the wild and garden forms, particularly show auriculas, were featured in the slide program.

A primrose plant sale is expected in May for the Juneau-Douglas area, and proceeds will go to the national society towards the cost of color covers for the APS quarterly.

Membership has been steadily increasing in Alaska, with 41 current members and hopes for more. The group hopes to increase the library holdings. Suggestions for future get-togethers as well as a request for more volunteers for group activities are made.

OREGON

Oregon Chapter

The Oregon Chapter meets every third Friday from September through May at 1 p.m. at the Milwaukie Community Club (42nd and Jackson Street) in Milwaukie. For more information on meetings and programs, please call Ann Lunn at (503) 640-4582.

Valley Hi Chapter

The Valley Hi Chapter meets the second Monday of September, October and from February through May in members' homes in the Portland area. The meetings begin at 1 p.m. For more information, contact Thelma Genheimer at (503) 649-3537.

WASHINGTON

Eastside Chapter

Meets the first Monday of every month at the Universal Savings Bank, 6615 132nd Ave. N.E., Kirkland at the Bridal Falls Mall at 7:30 p.m.

October meeting: Sally Cadranell gave a talk and presentation on dahlias and a general discussion of primrose cultivations followed. The annual plant exchange was held.

November meeting: Thea Oakley moderated a discussion on *Primula* species.

Seattle Chapter

Meets four times a year. Contact June Skidmore, president, for information. Telephone: (206) 232-5766.

Tacoma Chapter

Meets the first Tuesday of each month, except July and August, in the Fireside Room of the United Methodist Church, 1919 West Pioneer, Puyallup, at 7:30 p.m.

October meeting: Via a "Primula Worldwide" symposium video, Ron McBeath gave an excellent presentation on the cultivation of plants in pots for the alpine house or cold frame.

Washington State Chapter

Meets the second Friday of each month, except July and August, at the United Good Neighbor Center at 305 S. 43rd St., Renton at 7:45 p.m. Family members and other guests are welcome.

October meeting: Steve Doonan of Grand Ridge Nursery presented the program on "Plants and Primulas from Nepal." Members enjoyed a plant sale (trade, barter?) Elda Behm had a four-page write up in the latest issue of *Beautiful Gardens* magazine. Congratulations, Elda (and Ray)!

continued on page 27

Journal Report

by Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

JOURNEY TO THE SOUTH

Two of our members donated seed of *Primula magellanica* to the seed exchange this year. To read about it in its native habitat, check out the September, 1994, issue (Vol. 62, No. 3) of the **Quarterly Bulletin** of the Alpine Garden Society.

The issue is devoted to South American treks and alpinists. Peter Erskine describes the country and plants he and John Watson saw in 1992 as they led a group of AGS members through southern Patagonia. Though many of the plant species he describes (and which are beautifully illustrated by color photographs) are unfamiliar to us, *Primula magellanica* leaps out from the page.

Primula magellanica prefers wet ground and is often found on moist cliffs, open slopes or along river banks. Erskine states that a better form, *P. magellanica* var. *decipiens*, grows in the Falkland Islands in sandy turf with dry, but cool conditions.

Cultural conditions preferred by *P. magellanica* are outlined in a second article in the same issue. A cool, but well-lighted situation is best. A covering of glass will prevent the farina from washing off. Since the root system is shallow, care must be taken to keep the soil moist.

Since it appears *P. magellanica* may be short-lived, the author suggests planting several in a "community pot" to encourage seed set and reseeding.

JOURNEY FARTHER NORTH

The June, 1994 issue of *The Rock Garden* from the Scottish Rock Garden Club is full of information for the *Primula* enthusiast.

Ian Scott, an APS member and contributor to *Primroses*, discusses "The Unexpected *Primula*." He describes experiences we all have

had. We assume the name on a seed packet is correct. When the plant grows and blooms we automatically link the name to the plant until someone comes along and says, "That can't be right." Then it is time to check the reference books. Then we order a seed packet labeled *Primula* sp. and eagerly await the first bloom to see what we have. Finally, there is the excitement of finding a rare white-flowered form among the seedlings.

A second article in the same issue profiles *PP. sessilis*, *reidii* and *macrophylla* ssp. *moorcroftiana*. A nice color photograph accompanies the piece. These three primulas grow in peaty turf or in peat pockets on rocks. The common requirement seems to be abundant moisture.

To provide such a place in your garden, Ian and Margaret Young give instructions for a peat bed. They suggest soil mixes that are water retentive, but do not require large amounts of peat. Maintenance and choices of appropriate plants are well covered.

AND SLUGS

It had to happen sooner or later! Finally, someone has written a book about slugs. **Field Guide to the Slug**, by David Gordon, is published by Sasquatch Books in Seattle. For a mere \$5.95, the reader can learn about the "seven wonders of slugdom." On a more practical note, the author tests and ranks various methods for controlling slugs. He concludes copper barriers are the most effective whereas salt causes undue pain - for the slug, presumably. ❖

Notes from the Editor

Information received at the Editor's desk

FALL BOUNTY

Have you received any catalogs yet? Those lists to tempt you to order all the luscious sounding promises of treasures to come? A Barnhaven catalog supplement and the Karmic Exotix Nursery ones have arrived on my doorstep.

Angela Bradford of Barnhaven has added two new color series: Flamingo, a range of pinks in the polyanthus that sound lovely and Harmony in the acaulis, pastel pinks, blues and mauves with some Osiered Amber. Both are appealing -- you must read the descriptions to get the full, tempting effect.

One species added is *P. bellidifolia*, one of those more difficult plants that has splendid, mauve-shaded-with-silver-meal flowers that you would desperately love to grow. There is a very good black and white photo by Jay Lunn in **Primroses**, Spring, 1994, p.14, that does not do it justice. If you saw it in color....

The *Primula* species listed in the Karmic catalog are collected from exotic places all over the world: China, Kazakhstan, Slovenia, Turkey. *Primula halleri*, the subject of a recent "Plant Portrait" is in there, as well as collected seed of *P. wulfeniana*. There's seed of wild collected auricula, too. How can one resist?

Primula sieboldii

One other seed opportunity has come to my attention. You will remember Paul Held who wrote about his collection of *Primula sieboldii* and provided the wonderful photographs for the Fall, 1993, issue of **Primroses**. He has at last established his American Sakurasoh Association and you will notice his ad in this issue.

The purpose of joining his association is to grow *P. sieboldii* seed collected from plants he has grown and hybridized for over 15 years. You will be expected to be an active grower and

participate eventually in an exchange of *P. sieboldii* seed but if you ever wanted to grow *P. sieboldii* in great numbers, this would be an opportunity. Write to him for more details.

NEW BOOKS

Flora and Fauna in Seattle (121 First Ave. South, Seattle, WA 98104) have sent a list of recent titles available. While no primrose title caught my eye, there are a number of field guides that might be useful on primula hunting expeditions.

A new book on the auricula is in process in Great Britain. Written by Peter Ward and Gwen Baker it is expected to be published in April, 1995. It will include notes "from many experienced raisers and growers," on all classes of auriculas including doubles and stripes. This news was gathered from the summer **Newsletter** of the National Auricula and Primula Society (NAPS)(Midland and West).

In the same newsletter there is mention of a new booklet or "society guide" on the history of the auricula. Written by David Tarver, **Auricula History** is available for 2.25 English pounds from David Tarver, Treasurer, NAPS (Midland and West) 9 Church Street, Belton, Loughborough, Leicestershire, England, U.K. LE12 9UG. If you write for one, you might include something for postage, as I don't think they were imagining sending it overseas.

PACKAGING PRIMROSES

I've had a request on how to package a primula plant to ship it by mail to a friend. I haven't had any luck in pinning down someone to write a reply, but I can tell you how I do it. And I know it works most of the time.

Bare-root the plant and wash off the roots carefully, trying not to get the leaves wet. This is true for both primroses and auriculas, as wrapped up in the dark, the leaves rot!

Wrap just the roots in a bit of moist paper towel or tissue. Just moist -- don't drown them. I wrap a small plastic bag around only the roots and fold it up and over so it doesn't cover the plant up past the neck but so there is no air left in the bag.

Then take a half-page of newspaper and carefully roll up the plant with its roots in the plastic bag into a flat tube. Don't wrap it too tightly. You can cut off the top or gently fold it over. But leave a bit of air in there. The newspaper seems to preserve enough moisture to keep the plant from drying out, and adds

some protection. At the same time it absorbs extra moisture to keep the leaves from rotting. The newspaper tube then goes into another, larger plastic bag and this goes into a box or even a padded envelope for mailing. A small auricula offset will even fit in an airmail letter and arrives quickly enough that there is little damage to the plant.

I am usually only sending one or two plants -- I don't know how commercial growers proceed. Perhaps we could hear from them, or other APS members who send plants to their friends. ❖

News from the Chapters

continued from page 24

November meeting: In a program titled "Bits and Pieces," all members shared their knowledge of primula culture, propagation and their use in the garden.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia Primrose Group

Meets every two months, starting in January, on the third Wednesday at Southlands Nursery, 6550 Balaclava, Vancouver, B.C.

November meeting: Cy Happy of Tacoma gave a talk and showed slides of primulas from around the world. He gave a bit of history, a bit of nomenclature and a bit of geography. The very interesting talk was well received by the 20 or so members attending. Some of the club's primula seed was also distributed. ❖

APS Bookstore

American Primrose Society members are able to get a special price on two invaluable reference books:

The new John Richards book, **Primula**, can be purchased for \$36 US, plus \$4.65 postage (US only).

Joseph Halda's book, **The Genus Primula**, is available to APS members for \$20 US, plus \$2.90 postage (US only).

Older titles that are now out of print will be made available if used copies can be found. Send your list of title requests to society librarian Thea Oakley.

Address your orders and inquiries to:

Thea Oakley
American Primrose society librarian
3304 288th Ave. N.E.
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Society Notes

The New Zealand Alpine Garden Society



invites you to join other overseas members enjoying the benefits of our Society. Two informative Bulletins each year and an extensive NZ Native section in our seed list enhance the contact with New Zealand alpine plant lovers. Enquiries to the Secretary, or join now by sending N.Z. \$20 for annual membership, personal cheques welcome.

**The New Zealand Alpine Garden Society,
PO Box 2984, Christchurch, NEW ZEALAND.**

The APS Primula x 'Juliana'; Registry - Don't Forget

The APS Board of Directors decided at the 1992 "Primula Worldwide" symposium to establish a registry system for the identification of *Primula* x 'Juliana' hybrids, both old and new. If you raise a new variety you feel is worth naming, send for a registration form, making sure to include a photograph. Dorothy Springer, 7213 S. 15th St., Tacoma WA 98465.

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DONINGTON PLANTS

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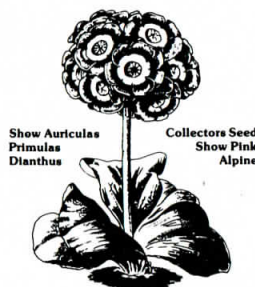
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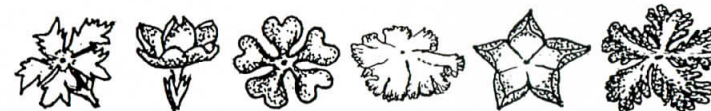


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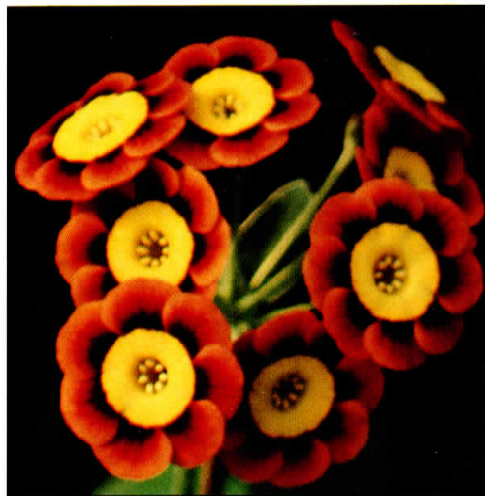
Dues for individual or household membership in the American Primrose Society, domestic and foreign, are \$15 U.S. per calendar year (\$16 for renewals postmarked after January 1); \$40 for three years; or \$200 for an individual life membership. Submit payment to the treasurer. Membership renewals are due November 15 and are delinquent at the first of the year.

Membership includes a subscription to the quarterly **Primroses**, seed exchange privileges, slide library privileges and the opportunity to join a Round Robin.

PUBLICATIONS

Manuscripts for publication in the quarterly are invited from members and other gardening experts, although there is no payment. Please include black and white photographs if possible. Send articles directly to the coordinating editor.

Advertising rates per issue: full page, \$100; half page, \$50; quarter page, \$25; eighth page and minimum, \$12.50. Artwork for ads is the responsibility of the advertiser, and camera ready copy is appreciated. Submit advertising to the editor.



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Report and photo
by John Gibson

Photo by Orval Agee



Primula chionantha
featured in "Plant Portrait" on page 13.



Primroses

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