

Primroses

Spring 1995
Volume 53, No. 2



PRIMROSES

Quarterly of the
American Primrose Society
Spring 1995
Volume 53, Number 2

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Many thanks to Rod Deacon who has been a great support as Managing Editor for the last four issues. His help has been invaluable.

The index to Vol. 52 can be found accompanying the Spring, 1995, issue.

EDITORIAL DEADLINES

Winter issue ... November 1
Spring issue ... February 1
Summer issue ... May 1
Fall issue ... August 1

PRIMROSES (ISSN 0162-6671) is published quarterly by the American Primrose, Primula and Auricula Society, 9705 SW Spring Crest Dr., Portland, OR 97225. Second-Class postage paid at Hillsboro, OR and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Primroses, 9705 SW Spring Crest Dr., Portland, OR 97225

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PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Photo on page 13 is from the editor's box of historical photos and is uncredited. All other photos are credited.

ON THE COVER

A recent discovery in Frank Cabot's garden has prompted him to write about an attractive new color variation of *Primula florindae*. See article on page 1 and color photo on center spread.

A Fragrant Woodland Beauty, A New Form of *Primula florindae*

by Frank Cabot who gardens at La Malbaie, Quebec

Primula florindae is the most robust species in the *Sikkimensis* section. As a result it is sometimes considered humdrum and on the verge of being banal by *Primula* enthusiasts in the U.K. In North America, where sustained success with Asiatic primulas is only possible in the northern and cooler coastal regions, it is a most gratifying embellishment of the woodland garden.

In one such woodland garden that enjoys a maritime Zone IV climate in Charlevoix County, Quebec, some 90 miles northeast of Quebec City along the north shore of the St. Lawrence, *P. florindae* has become the mainstay of color in late July and much of August and more than justifies its prominent use of space in the garden with its extended period of bloom, delightful range of colors and haunting fragrance that permeates the woodland, especially at dusk.

Starting with one plant it did not take long to learn that if left to itself in a moist woodland setting *P. florindae* would soon colonize the entire county and produce seedlings running the gamut of every shade from pale yellow through orange, russet and dusky amber to darkest red. Our solution was to separate the colors and concentrate the color forms along the length of discrete artificial streams (of which there are five in total) whose banks serve as the preferred habitat for a variety of primulas that express their gratitude for being placed in a spot that enables them to enjoy continually wet feet and part-sun by producing wave after wave of color from early May, with the *Auriculata* section, to late September, with *P. capitata*.

To date we have had three streams whose margins incorporate *P. florindae*; one is

exclusively yellow, (presumably the type), the second orange to russet, and the third darkest red. Once there are sufficient divisions to fill the planting areas we make a point of cutting off the seed heads well before there is a chance of their seeding.

Several years ago a single seedling flowered that was distinctly different from any of the usual *P. florindae* color forms that we were familiar with, presumably a hybrid with another species. Its color is mid-way between the yellow and red forms, but pink rather than orange. Since then the hybrid, which is sterile, has been cosseted and divided to the point where the margins of a fourth stream are about to be committed to its display.

In almost every aspect, other than its color, the plant passes for *P. florindae* and, out of bloom, is indistinguishable. In bloom the fragrance is identical as well.

The woodland garden provides a happy home for a great many *Primula* species including a number of forms of *P. alpicola* and a wide range of *P. waltonii* hybrids, both of which are endemic to the Tsangpo basin as is *P. florindae*, with all three species having been collected and introduced by Kingdon Ward in 1924. Both *P. alpicola* and *P. waltonii* are cited by Smith and Fletcher as crossing readily with *P. florindae* in the garden. The presumption is that our new and welcome primula is the product of one of these crosses.

A Fragrant Woodland Beauty continued

In referring to *P. florindae* Smith and Fletcher reported that:

"Plants otherwise quite similar to *P. florindae* have been collected with reddish amber flowers and this color-change may or may not be due to crossing. But other specimens are apparently intermediates between *P. alpicola* and *P. florindae*. Under garden conditions they are said to cross freely, giving flowers pale-yellow to old ivory, rosy-fawn and even cinnabar-red. Hybrids presumed to be between *P. florindae* and *P. waltonii* are reported as favoring the former but with pink flowers. More exact data from experimental crossing are desirable." (**The Genus Primula: Sections Candelbra**, Vol. 33, Part 4, 1943, p. 443)

I am about as inarticulate at describing color variations as I am in describing fragrances, despite being keenly aware of the differences involved, and I welcome the views of those who read this and see the color photographs as to whether our new hybrid has *P. alpicola* or *P. waltonii* as its other parent. I am particularly curious to learn from other enthusiasts whether they have had a similar hybrid appear in their garden, or other hybrids of *P. florindae* with uniquely different characteristics. So often what one believes to be different turns out to be old hat!

In the absence of any hard information about whether our hybrid is unique or run-of-the-mill it has been given the temporary name of *P. florindae* 'Raynald's Form' in honor of Raynald Bergeron who helps me in the garden at Les Quatre Vents and is a very quick study, having been the first to notice that this one plant was different from the surrounding hordes.

In any event our hybrid is flourishing and increasing nicely and I will be glad to exchange

it for other sterile hybrids of *P. florindae* (subject to reviewing a photograph to make sure that the plant to be exchanged is one that I do not have). I also welcome readers' views on the matter.

I have heard of *P. florindae* 'Keillour' Hybrids (or is it 'Keylor' as listed in Piers Trehane's Index Hortensis?) but have never had unusual results from the seeds sown with that name (and besides this plant is sterile). Smith and Fletcher's comments would indicate that most *florindae* variants from the yellow type could be the result of hybridization with *P. alpicola* and that the *P. waltonii* cross produces pink flowers. Since our sterile hybrid has the only distinctly pink flowers among many hundreds of *florindae* variants I am inclined to think *P. waltonii* is the other parent. But then Graham Stuart Thomas states that:

"Strains with orange-red flowers -- presumed hybrids with *P. waltonii* -- are often seen but do not compare in garden value with the clear color of the type. The vulgarly named 'Rasp Red' is better." (**Perennial Garden Plants**, 3rd ed., 1990, p. 308)

Thomas goes on to suggest that:

"*Primula waltonii*, of wine-dark coloring, has smaller flowers and is to be avoided because it hybridizes so freely with all (*Sikkimensis*) primulas and with *P. florindae*, usually to their detriment." (p. 309)

Well, in this possibly unusual case, I'd like to believe that *P. florindae* 'Raynald's Form' is a unique and superior color variant and that its sterility means that it is destined to become a welcome part of the *Primula* enthusiast's garden, enjoying the robustness of its *P. florindae* parentage and behaving in the appealing manner of the type, as described by A. T. Johnson as going "its own way and subduing its own weeds (with) unchanging good temper under any conditions that have any pretence at wetness." (quoted in G.S. Thomas **Perennial Garden Plants**, p. 308) ❖

In Search of Primula

Garden visits or trips to see primula are a part of the memories of every primrose fancier. Here are reports of a garden visit, a primrose memory and an expedition in search of a primrose.

WINDYRIDGE IN APRIL

by Tom McCrea, Wales

An article in the Spring, 1994, issue of the **Primroses** caught my eye. It was by Jacqueline Giles and entitled "My Barnhaven Elizabethan Primroses." Why so interested? I had the very great pleasure of visiting Jacquie's garden, Windyridge, in April, 1994, in connection with the Primula Weekend held in Harrogate, Yorkshire, organized, and most efficiently run, by the Yorkshire Society for the Conservation of Garden Plants. As a direct result, I joined the North Wales Group of the National Society for the Conservation of Garden Plants.

Written on a rainy day in September in North Wales, the experience of visiting Jacquie's

lovely garden in Bolton Percy, Yorkshire, is made more vivid by the photographs I took at the time.

Bolton Percy lies to the east of the Pennines and to the Southwest of York, the nearest river being the Wharfe. Despite the Pennines being largely limestone with millstone grit caps in places, the soil in the area is a heavy loam, the plain of York is alluvial and in places, one of which is Jacquie's garden, looks to be on the heavier side. She assured me it has 18 inches of wonderful loam over solid clay. No problems with the moisture the plants need, notably in the bog garden areas.

The contrast in weather conditions could not be more marked. The Saturday in April in

Photo by J. McCrea



The Windyridge garden slopes down from the house.

Windyridge in April continued

Harrogate was very cold, dry and frosty, with snow on the hills. As the day progressed, it became sunny but not a great deal warmer. It had been raining heavily most of the winter and early spring, and there was still flood water on the fields which stretch away from the bottom of Windyridge. The garden itself slopes down from the house and sideways, right across onto some additional land acquired to extend it.

The paths which divide it are either grass or roughly-ground tree bark chips, stepped by timber cross pieces at intervals. This gives the whole garden a more natural feel as opposed to gravel of paved pathways. There is also a cobbled path winding through a variety of Asiatic Primulas in the bog garden. (Cobbles are smooth egg-shaped stones of various sizes usually found on sea-shores and set "pointed" upwards. Wonderful to cycle over!!

The wind, which was blowing, cut like a knife, but who cared when there were such treasures to see: polyanthus, including 'Cowichans', in every hue, from white through cream, soft yellow to ochre, pale to deep blue, shading through lavender to purple, pink and red to a deep black-appearing maroon; gold-laced polyanthus from garnet to mahogany to a port wine color so deep as to seem like jet. The lacing was so clear and divided each petal beautifully. The polyanthus I was particularly looking forward to seeing were the striped 'Victorians'. Marked like Japanese irises, these

were gorgeous. My favourite was white, shaded and edged lilac-blue.

My desire to see these "remembrancers" of times past had been kindled in the late seventies when I received my first copy of "Primroses by Barnhaven", the catalog of the nursery run by

Photo by J. McCre



The striped 'Victorians' were my favorite.

Jared and Sylvia Sinclair. I quote from that publication, "The 'Victorians' — Lustrous silk and satin and regal velvet textures, frothy frills, gleaming ribbons and genteel lace. All the opulence of an elegant era distilled in these sumptuous blooms." Whose imagination could fail to be stirred by such a description?

Almost every member of the *European Primula* section was there, oxlips, cowslips and the common primrose. *Primula acaulis*, now renamed *P. vulgaris*, provided splashes of creamy yellow all over the ground. It is amazing how clumps of these wild primrose, as well as the

oxlips and cowslips in general, lighten up even the darkest corners.

Double primroses, Jack-in-the-Greens and Jackanapes vied with Jackanapes-on-Horseback, Hose-in-Hose, Gallygaskins and Pantaloons, most of which I had never previously seen, all on display in an open garden. Truly a feast of yesteryear in the here and now.

Although planted in a small area, each makes a definite statement. There is a small bog garden where the land does not drain so well, planted with polyanthus 'Winter White'.

Another area has double and single auriculas teamed with scarlet double tulips. As a purely personal view, I didn't like this part as much as some others, and could have preferred a different color tulip, possibly one of the smaller species.

The area I really did fall for was one with white *Lunaria annua variegata* (variegated Honesty) and *Carex elata 'Aurea'* (Bowles Golden Sedge), seen at its best from April to October, in a moist site with *Helleborus orientalis* (the Lenten Rose) whose colors range from white through pink to near black — all teamed with polyanthus 'Winter White' and 'Harvest Yellow'.

What impressed me most? Despite its originator's commitment to sections of the genus *Primula*, the garden was not a "shrine to the primrose."

Mature trees and shrubs provide the framework, with the polyanthus and other primulas plus perennials like hostas, bulbs (tulips, daffodils and fritillaries) and various grasses completing the canvas.

To create it-must have been a daunting task. The results achieved to date — when is a garden ever finished? — are visually stunning. Perhaps I will be fortunate enough to see it again in five or ten years time. I think it will only have grown better. Florence Bellis would have liked it. What better accolade?

PRIMROSE MEADOWS

by Keith Muir, Duncan, B.C.

By this time, in the late 50's - early 60's, the native primrose was becoming a real rarity in much of rural Britain. Although garden collecting was a factor, the major cause of their near demise in the area I came from (the West Midlands) was the use of MCPA and 24D as herbicides on the farm, as many of the primroses in this area were hedgerow plants.

In this period I was trying to justify my existence aboard a Royal Navy air craft carrier of ancient vintage being used as a training ship. When on a trip aboard this vessel off the North West coast of Britain, on one leisurely Sunday afternoon, in early spring, we were threading our way through the Hebrides. At one point we were very close inshore. The low wet-looking meadows adjacent had a strange yellow cast. Primroses. Thousands upon thousands of primroses.

Coming from a rural district where they were an extreme rarity it became a permanent feature of my memory both from the beauty of the scene and the thought of what we were doing with our natural legacy in the cause of "progress". Incredibly, there were sheep grazing freely among the primroses with obviously no major ill effect on either.

EXPEDITIONS IN SEARCH OF THE TRUE 'COWICHAN'

by Keith Muir, Duncan, B.C.

As a resident in the valley that gave its name to the Cowichan primula, I have travelled far and wide in this fair vale searching for the elusive "original" Cowichan.

It seems that every long term resident of our valley, who has any interest in gardening at all, was a particularly good friend of either Major Nocker, in whose garden the original is reputed

Expeditions in Search of 'Cowichan' continued

to have miraculously sprung, or of his neighbour, the Neals, who aided in its initial propagation. As all of these old timers were given a hunk of this amazingly prolific plant it should not have been an arduous search to find the same.

The first of my pilgrimages followed a lead to a dear old soul who offered to show me the treasured gem and to allow photographs to be taken. In a high state of excitement I arrived at the hallowed ground to be shown with great pride a large polyanthus of Pacific Giant type and unblinking yellow eye. A couple of slides were blown, to be polite.

The next inter valley primula trek was also full of promise but resulted in another slide of a grocery store primula for the collection.

A further trip into the valley hinterland came closer. A large eyeless primula of the primrose type was shown. Almost certainly a Barnhaven Hybrid.

The next candidate was from a young friend's garden who had been given a piece of the "original". I in my turn was given an offset when the plant was out of flower. In due course a polyanthus head raised itself up along with my

Photo by J. Kerridge



The true 'Cowichan'? This plant is still grown on Vancouver Island today.

high hopes. It opened eyeless, small and dark. Surely I had it at last. Cy Happy was judging in Victoria when my treasure was in bloom. Confirmation was at hand.

Cy said, "An interesting little thing but...." ❖

Good News! A New Editor



The editor search committee has the very good luck of finding Claire Cockcroft, of Redmond, Washington, who has agreed to take on the editorship of the quarterly.

Welcome, Claire. Claire is a recent member of the society but has a woodland garden that boasts a number of healthy *Primula* species, and has worked with the Seattle Arboretum on important assignments over the last few years.

The transition between editors will be gradual over the next few issues. But please send any letters, articles or suggestions for topics to Claire: Claire Cockcroft, Editor
American Primrose Society
4805 228th Ave. NE,
Redmond, WA 98053-8327

Some Dilemmas of a Primroser

by John Kerridge, Vancouver, B.C.

SHOW, DIVIDE OR POLLINATE?

It is early spring. A choice and rare primrose is budding nicely and well clumped; there is anticipation of a fine plant for the shows. But wait! Divisions were promised to several friends. Do we rip it apart, or will they wait until late spring? The conflict comes up — whether to save a plant for exhibition or not.

When the plant is in bloom another problem arises — whether to pollinate or not. To be sure, a pollinated flower will fade and spoil before you can get it on the show bench. In the pin-eyed, the pistil withers, and with a thrum, the flower will, of necessity, be devastated by the aggressive treatment to get at the pistil. There goes the opportunity to enter the show; it is either show or pollinate, seldom both. Seed production is vital. But the decision of which plants to use for pollination and which for exhibition is difficult.

Sometimes a little surreptitious pollination is done right on the bench, for there is certainly an abundance of new sources of pollen, with great new possibilities. Of course, without permission, borrowing pollen is frowned upon, but who has not seen that deft thrust of a toothpick disguised as adjusting a petal. But to be honest, by show time, it is late anyway, and pollination may have already occurred.

Here the dilemma continues, because those folks are waiting for their divisions, but for a seed crop the plant should not be disturbed until the seed is harvested. This single fact — the prevention of late spring division because of the need to wait for seed pods to ripen — results in the delay in spreading good plants.

Division in late summer has not been so successful for me. Of the three times in the year

when division can be done, early spring, when new growth starts, is the most favourable. Late spring after blooming or late summer as new growth starts again does not give as good results.

SUMMER DISASTER

On a totally different matter, something that caused a great dilemma and caused havoc for several years was the wilting and loss of many plants in mid-summer. It was not from lack of water or insufficient shade. Every year the outer leaves of polyanthus would turn yellow with brown patches, become floppy, and wither. The plants would shrink and become loose in the soil; in fact, roots were brown and soft, rotted away. Whole areas died. There were numerous diagnoses and consequent but ineffective treatments. My lack of experience was evident.

Seeing the leaves failing, concentrated nitrogen was applied, seeming to cause more distress. The leaves were only reflecting the lack of effective roots. A neighbour who is a soil scientist felt there was phosphorus deficiency, but superphosphate did not help. The university had a look at some specimens, but nothing came of it.

The Provincial Department of Agriculture was helpful, and I enjoyed the visit, way out of town, sitting in the waiting room with my sick primula amongst farmers with blueberry bushes, fruit canes or tree branches. They were getting spot diagnoses. Not so for our plant. At first it was not acceptable for study until I was able to convince them that this is, albeit humble, a commercial enterprise.

Some Dilemmas of a Primrosier continued

Laboratory work was necessary. Later a phone call advised that I had brought in "what amounted to a decomposed corpse that had died days before." This had become invaded by many greedy bugs, making it impossible to identify any original offender. However the fungus *Pythium* was plentiful. This will invade dying or dead plants anyway, but we were on the right track.

The treatment advised was out of the question here — to fumigate the soil to a considerable depth. Impossible as I do not have that sort of equipment, but perhaps I could have rented it. The alternative, or rather adjunctive treatment, was to increase drainage by deep digging, and adding large amounts of peat moss. I was surprised that sand, gravel, or pumice were not recommended, and probably should have used those. Digging the whole works by hand, and replanting, was quite a job, but did help to some extent, however it was no cure.

I happened on the solution in a simple and fortuitous way, and should have known better, but it was lack of experience. A single sheet on "Tips on Growing Primula" by Herb Dickson says, "Some of the new systemic fungicides work wonders on Primulas that are very difficult to keep alive in hot summers. It is not the heat primarily but a root rot fungus that grows in warm moist soil".

Well, that was it. Fungicide treatments do fix the problem, but it is a recurrent one, and a prophylactic spray over the leaves every three or four weeks in the warm weather is all that is needed. Incidentally, my plants on Saltspring Island, where everything has been moved from Vancouver now, never had this problem.

The problem started suddenly, and can be traced to spreading compost that was not fully rotted

and had just sat in a soggy mess. Also, although seaweed can be an excellent fertilizer, some had been left in plastic bags in the sun before spreading, and who knows what fungi were incubated. Anyway, systemic fungicide worked wonders, However, it is expensive for a large area and for repeated treatments.

TOO MUCH WATER!

The damage caused by 'two-legged and four-legged pests' was described in an earlier article (Spring, 1993, p.15). A new problem arose since then. Who would have thought that the man to do the power-washing, coming when he could find time, would arrive the very day that plants were groomed for the national show and laid in the shade against the house? Show auriculas don't do well with even a drop of water or a fine spray, but a power wash! It wasn't only the water. Falling dirt and a dragged hose completed the disaster, with a few bashes from the ladder for keeps.

In moving to Saltspring Island, as well as the grown plants, I took a hundred and thirty flats of seedlings. There would have been more species, but the plastic cover over a cold frame containing some sixty varieties collapsed under heavy rains and the flood washed all the seeds into one corner. Friends have accepted clumps of the mixture as pot luck, and we shall have fun identifying them.

MISTING AND DUSTING

Here's another experience, and something to avoid. Heading down to Washington State for my first APS show, I had the pots top-dressed with dry peat moss. This is customary in our local alpine garden club.

A lot of this peat moss removed itself with the breeze, going down the freeway with the sun-roof open. For a while I wondered why the car was so dusty. At the same time, I sprayed the plants periodically with a hand mister over the shoulder to keep them in good shape. But this caused the moss to glue to each petal and leaf. That evening the motel room looked like a

continued on page 26



Under the Overhang

by Rick Lupp

**PRIMULA MARGINATA
QUEEN OF THE SOUTHERN ALPS**

Primula marginata can not only be highly recommended to the beginning rock gardener as an almost sure success for the open rock garden, but also provides an almost endless source of pleasure for the slightly jaded enthusiast.

The plant is found in nature in the Alps of southern France and Italy from 1500 feet to over 9000 feet and almost always on cliffs or steep slopes of limestone. This wide altitudinal range is one of the attributes which allows *P. marginata* to adapt so well to the rock garden where it thrives in a rich, gritty soil with morning sun.

A small problem with growing the plant outside of the alpine house is the loss to winter rains of the lovely yellow farina which decorates the surface of the young foliage and the margins of the heavily toothed older foliage. The plant is frequently grown under cover to prevent this loss.

The often sweet-scented corolla varies in size from 3/4 inch to 1 and 1/2 inches and ranges in color from lavender-blue to rich blue and from shades of violet to almost pink. The corolla is almost always decorated with a whitish eye which is quite prominent in some forms such as

Photo by J. Lunn



Primula marginata has handsome toothed leaves.

Under the Overhang continued

the well known cultivar *P. m.* 'Linda Pope'. Both in cultivation and in the wild, older plants tend to form a rather prominent woody base attached to a long, deep rhizome which tends to make it look much like a little shrub.

When grown in the rock garden, *P. marginata* is long-lived. We have plants that have been in place for eight years and are decorative both in and out of bloom. Plants grown in the alpine house are a bit touchier and require a yearly repotting to remain at their peak. Propagation is easy from seed sown in late winter or from cuttings or divisions made during the growing season.

Primula marginata tends to be one of the first primulas to bloom in the alpine house along with *P. allionii* and *P. villosa*, sometimes even blooming in December and January here at the

nursery. As a result of their over-lapping bloom period, there are a large number of terrific hybrids of these three primulas. The hybrids tend to make compact plants of a hardy constitution and bear mostly large blooms on short stems with prominent white eyes.

Try your hand at making specific crosses between these plants or simply grow them together under cover and let the pollinators do their work. *P. marginata* x *P. villosa* seems to be a favorite cross of our local bugs and we now have a large number of forms from saving seed of these two plants when they have been grown near each other.

Dozens of named forms of *P. marginata* are now available in the nursery trade in the U.K. and these forms are slowly becoming available in North America. Seek them out and grow them for a real sure thing! ❖

Regional Reporters

The quarterly depends on contributions from its readers. In order to find regular contributions, a system of regional reporters has been created.

APS members are encouraged to send any primrose news either directly to the editor, or to any regional reporter that is near them.

The regional reporters, in turn, will send material they have received and reports they have to the editor in time for the next issue.

Deadlines for material to be sent to the editor are found inside the front cover of every issue.

The regional editors so far are:

ALASKA

Misty Haffner, 8118 Hamstead Lane, Juneau, AK 99801-9116

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Dennis Oakley, 10060 Dennis Place, Richmond, B.C. Canada V7A 3G8

ONTARIO

Glen Spurrell, 72 St. Anne's Road, Toronto, Ont., Canada M6J 2C3

NEW YORK/NEW ENGLAND

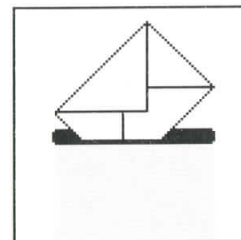
Fred Knapp, 58 Kaintuck Lane, Locust Valley, NY 11560

MINNESOTA/MIDWEST

Karen Schellinger, 31335 Kalla Lake Rd., Avon, MN 56310

UNITED KINGDOM

John Gibson, 'Farinosa', 3A Primrose Lane, Kirkburton, Huddersfield, Yorkshire, U.K. HD8 0QY



From the Mailbox

Letters from our readers

and, as germination advances, I can place the trays on the ground without fear of field mice, birds, or too much heat destroying my plants.

I also start other plants that need stratification this way, such as alpiners. This bag idea may be old news to some growers. I just was so happy to find something to outsmart the slugs, that I wanted to share the idea.

SUPPLIES AND INSTRUCTIONS

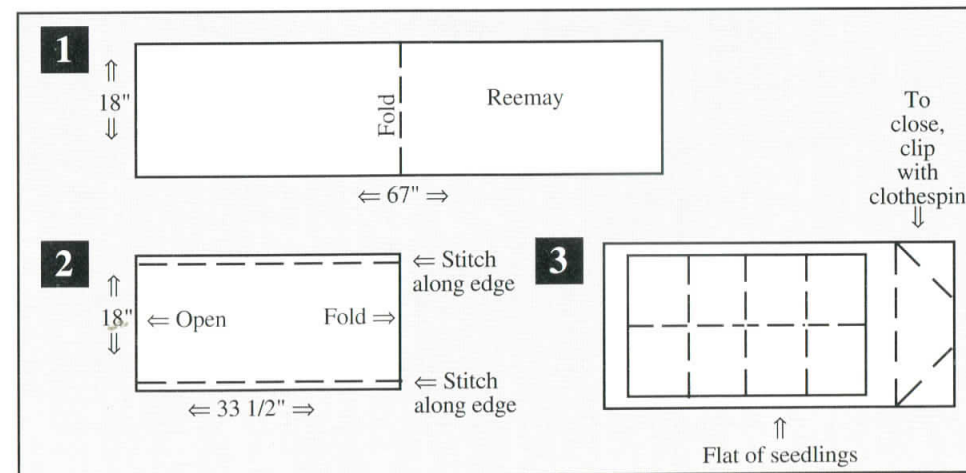
Reemay row cover: 2 yards = 4 bags
Stapler, needle and thread, or sewing machine
Scissors

To make a bag cut an 18 inch strip from end edge. Strip should be 18 inches x 67 inches. Fold in half and stitch or staple both long sides. If you stitch, leave edge as is, and if you staple, fold edge over once and staple every inch.

The general size of the flats I use is 10 inches x 21 inches x 2 inches and I close the open end with clip clothes pins. The Reemay is cut larger to allow easy installation of my flats and I also need extra room for my labels to stand above my trays or pots.

Good luck to you all,

Mary J. Lopez, Mashpee, Massachusetts ❖



Corrections and Apologies

There are three small corrections that must be called to your attention

Primula florida

In the Summer, 1994, issue of the quarterly, Ian Scott, in his article on primula species he is raising from expedition-collected seed, mentioned a clump of Cox 5078 growing in a colony by a tree stump, thought to be *Primula rupicola*. This has proved not to be the case, a case of mistaken information. The primula is indeed *Primula florida*. (Summer, 1994, p.24, middle of right-hand column.)

It is often only after plants have flowered that positive identification can be made. In fact, with these species, it must be difficult to identify them until you get to know the look of the species, from having grown them. Ian will be a font of information now from having grown so many species.

OMISSION

Apologies to John Gibson for the omission of part of a sentence in his article, "*Primula*

allionii in Yorkshire," p. 15 of the Winter, 1995, issue. The paragraph beginning on p. 18 should read, "Propagation is by cuttings or offsets. Cuttings root easily in damp sand. Indeed, when I accidentally break a piece of plant, I stick it in the sand on the bench and 90 percent of them root." The rest of the paragraph continues correctly.

'MRS. DYAS'

A note of clarification about the plant, *Primula allionii* 'Mrs. Dyas' shown in the Winter, 1995, issue. The name, though incorrect, is the one commonly used. The plant in Mrs. Eales' collection is not named, and so there is no other name in common use. The original plant named 'Mrs. Dyas' has become extinct. Sometimes one simply has to bow to the inevitable. But whatever the name, the plant is certainly an attractive one. ❖

Membership Twinning with the National Auricula and Primula Society

A dozen sets of correspondents have been set up as twins, with very favorable reports. If you would like a trans-Atlantic correspondent who would pay your National Auricula and Primula Society (Northern Section) (NAPS, Northern) subscription in return for your paying their American Primula Society (APS) subscription you need only contact the NAPS (Northern) secretary (address below) or write to the "Twinning" Coordinator for the American Primrose Society:

Dennis Oakley,
10060 Dennis Place
Richmond, B.C. Canada V7A 3G8

Enclose brief details of your primula interest.

Secretary of the NAPS (Northern):
D. G. Hadfield,
146, Queen's Road,
Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, U.K. SK8 5HY

Plant Portrait

Report by Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

Primula alpicola:

A COAT OF MANY COLORS

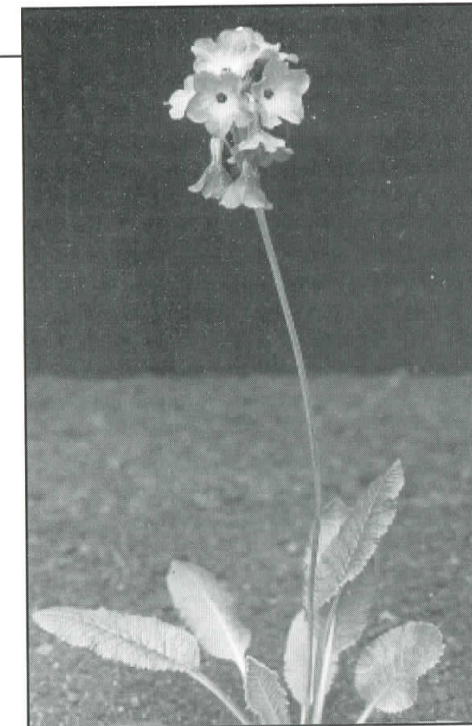
In 1924, in the gorge of the Tsangpo River of southeastern Tibet, Kingdon-Ward came upon a valley covered with acres of soft yellow, fragrant flowers. He called this new discovery 'Moonlight Sikkimensis'. South of the Tsangpo, he came upon meadows of violet, maroon, purple or white flowers which he called 'Joseph's Sikkimensis' because of the many color forms. W. W. Smith later named these two color variations, *Primula microdonta* var. *luna* and *P. microdonta* var. *violacea*. Today we know these plants as *P. alpicola*.

Primula alpicola does indeed resemble *P. sikkimensis*. To the observant gardener, there are several differences. *Primula alpicola* is smaller in all respects than its former namesake; the flowering stems reach no more than 20 inches high. The bright green leaves, which average 8 inches in length, are narrowly oval with a rounded, almost heart-shaped base. The funnel to saucer-shaped, fragrant flowers normally occur in a single umbel in cultivation, but in the wild there may have up to four superimposed umbels, rather like a candelabra. Kingdon-Ward described the 'Moonlight Sikkimensis' as, "a beautiful flower with a fragrance almost stupefying in its sweetness."

In its native home in southeastern Tibet, *P. alpicola* is found in open wet areas in conifer forests, in wet alpine meadows or near streams. In cultivation, therefore, it needs a cool, humid spot in fertile soil. The plants don't like waterlogged soil and cannot survive excessive heat or dryness. In the hot summer areas of the country, it is best to provide afternoon shade and, of course, moisture during dry periods.

The seed of *P. alpicola* germinates well and the seedlings are easy to transplant. The seedlings may vary in color unless the parent plants were hand-pollinated or color variants of the parents were isolated in the garden. Hand pollinating a

Photo by J. Lunn



Primula alpicola var. *violacea*

pin flower on a thrum flower will produce more seed than if the plants are left to nature's whims. Single plants will rarely produce seed as the pins are nearly totally self-sterile and thrums are only about 25 percent self-fertile.

If a plant produces a desirable color form, division in the early spring is recommended. The divided plants should be kept shaded and moist until new roots have been established.

The possibilities for hybridizing *P. alpicola* are intriguing. Although gardeners are most familiar with three color variants: *luna* (soft yellow), *alba* (white) and *violacea* (purple or violet), there are many other colors and subtle shades to be found, particularly in wild-collected seed. In 1936, Ludlow and Sherriff

Plant Portrait continued

described finding plants with lemon-yellow, purplish-pink and claret flowers all growing together. In another area, the flower colors ranged from white to pale and deep violet and reddish purple, even a reddish amber.

Primula alpicola crosses readily with *P. florindae* and results in a wide range of leaf forms and reddish or brownish flower colors not found in either parent. It will also cross with *P. sikkimensis* and possibly with *P. waltonii*.

Why not try your hand at hybridizing and your garden could, indeed, become a coat of many colors.

Sources:

Blasdale, W. C. (1948). **The Cultivated Species of Primula**. Univ. of California Press, Berkeley.
Fletcher, H. R. (1975). **A Quest of Flowers**. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.
Richards, A. J. (1993). **Primula**. Batsford, Ltd., London.

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. ❖

Society Slide Library Programs

APS members have four slide programs available to them from our slide library. These programs, of about 80 slides each, may be used for meetings or for your own enjoyment. They are:

- APS Slide Program (covers a variety of primroses)
- Auriculas
- Wild and Tame Primroses of Alaska
- Tall, Mid summer Blooming Primroses

To order, please send the program name and the date it is needed, along with a check or money order for \$10 US (payable to the APS Slide Library), to:

John A. O'Brien, APS Slide Librarian
9450 Herbert Place
Juneau, Alaska 99801

All programs must be returned within two weeks of receipt; return postage will cost approximately \$10.

Do You Have Slides To Share?

The APS Slide Librarian is looking for slides of named Primula Sieboldii, as well as slides of garden and border auriculas. If you have any slides of these plants to share, please contact John A. O'Brien, Sr., APS Slide Librarian, 9450 Herbert Place, Juneau, Alaska, 99801.

In Memorium... Birdie M. Padovich

Birdie Padovich was born in Pierce County, Washington in 1905, and died in North Bend, Washington, in 1994. She left a husband, Frank Padovich of North Bend; a daughter, Mollie Crary of Sequim, Washington; 2 granddaughters; several great and great-great grandchildren; and a sister, Izetta M. Renton of Snoqualmie, Washington.

The plant world lost a valuable member with her passing. If a plant could be raised and made happy, Birdie could do it. Her gardens, in North Bend and in East Washington at Lake Clelum, were full of rare and beautiful things. While the rest of us managed to raise one or two *Cypripedium*, *Primula acaulis*, *P. pubescens* and *P. spectabilis*, she had them in huge drifts, blooming like mad. The same was true with *Lewisia tweedyi* in all shades of apricot, yellow and pure white, *L. cotyledon*, and the blue *Meconopsis* poppy.

Birdie raised *Anemone pulsatilla* by the hundreds, from white to pale purple to deep rose, as well as all kinds of primroses, which were a favorite. Some of her magnolias are mammoth-sized and 60 to 70 years old. She also raised alpine plants from all over the world and had no trouble with such plants as *Aquilegia jonesii* and *A. scopulorum* in pink and rose and white.

One year Carl Worth led a plant hunt to Wyoming, Nevada, and Utah, where we collected many rare plants. Birdie traded seed and bulbs of our native plants with gardeners all over the world.

Birdie and her husband, Frank, went wherever a train, plane, ship, their motor home, or even a horse, could take them. One nice part was that whenever I could get away, they took me with them. We have really seen



the world and its wonders. We loved to go camping in the high places, botanizing or just watching the little animals and birds. We gardened together, helping each other build our gardens and sharing the plants that we grew.

We belonged to the Rhododendron Society (from its start), the Primrose Society, the Penstemon Society (from its start), the Iris Society and the Species Iris Society, the American Rock Garden Society, the English Alpine Garden Society and the Scottish Rock Garden Club. We started the Species Rhododendron Society and grew hundreds of species for distribution to get the public to grow them. Birdie also hybridized rhododendrons and azaleas.

I feel very lucky to have shared 90 years with a wonderful sister like Birdie. She had many friends from near and far who will miss her. She had a wonderful life and her passing came quickly and painlessly — for that I'm thankful. Some day I hope to again find her tending the flowers in God's gardens. I'm sure He would never waste such skill and talent!

Izetta M. Renton ❖

Primula cernua

Liz and I first saw *Primula cernua* growing outside at Inchriach, one autumn, several years ago. It was new to us and we could hardly believe the intensity of its blue color. Needless to say there were no plants for sale, but the following year John Lawson gave us some seed from which we raised a dozen or so plants.



The seed germinates easily in surface sown onto a peat based compost in late winter. Once the seedlings have been picked out, growth is fast and it is not unusual for plants to flower by the autumn of the same year. In their summer leaf it is difficult to distinguish them from other muscarioides, but as the plant forms its winter resting rosette the outer leaves develop a very wide petiole which is easily recognized. The blooms emerge in mid spring (after *P. concholata* but before *P. vialii*), and the long multi-flowered head is covered with protruding bracts which make it look like a spiked club. Flower color seems to be quite variable – from a rich royal blue to near white. This species does require a lot of moisture and does better if

a number are planted close together. Seed is set readily, and in abundance, which is lucky as it appears to be short lived – or perhaps my plants are just too dry in mid-summer!

I am extremely grateful to John for the seed of what was then a very rare plant, at a time when we were just starting out. Many a lasting friendship came from that seed. We gave away all our excess plants and seed, and we were presented with many a fine plant, in exchange. I am glad to report that *Primula cernua* is now widely in cultivation, not just from the original collection but also from Peter Cox (Cox 6141) and Henrik Zetterland (KGB 519).

Photo and story by I. Scott ❖

"A feast of yesteryear" –
primroses at Windyridge. See
article on page 3.



"A mainstay of color in late July and much of August," *Primula florindae* is also valued for its "haunting fragrance." See more on this new color form of *Primula florindae* in Frank Cabot's article on page 1.



Tips from Rosetta

An expert in raising primula from seed — mostly seed from her own hybridizing program — Rosetta has promised to pass on tips for better growing and hybridizing.

CHOOSING SEED PARENTS

In selecting seed parents, don't just look at the pretty colors. Evaluate the whole plant. Strong flower stems are very important, for example, so choose as a parent plant the one with strong stems, if the other choice has a weak stem.

Muddy colors usually can be cleared up by using pale yellow as one seed parent. This pale yellow can also give you pastels from hard red or orange flower colors. This doesn't work for blues, however.

Rosetta

Rosetta Jones ❖

Penpals

DANSK PRIMULA KLUB

A letter from the Dansk Primula Klub indicates one of their members would like to correspond with a member of the APS. His name and address:

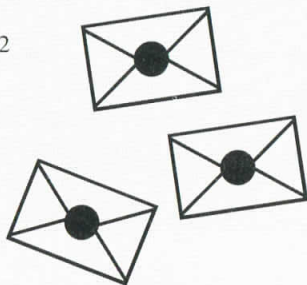
Torben Skov
Agerfeldvej 7
7550 Soervad
Denmark

No particular interests were mentioned, but anyone who would like to correspond with Mr. Skov, please write to him.

LIFE MEMBER

Long-time member and a life member of APS, as well, Alice Hills Baylor would enjoy hearing from any member who would like to write. Send your letters to:

Alice Hills Baylor
Stage Coach Road, Route 2
Stowe, VT 05672



News from the Chapters

A summary of the chapter meetings

ALASKA

Juneau Area

The local group has been combating our winter doldrums with slide programs. With the help of A.P.S. Librarian Thea Oakley, we have donated three new books to our local library: **Primulas** by John Richards, **A Plantsmans Guide to Primulas** by Philip Swindell and **Primroses and Auriculas** by Brenda Hyatt. We are currently working on plans for our May plant sale.

Kodiak Area

Plans are under way for the Kodiak Garden Club to have a group planting of *P. vialii*, along with the annual tour of Marie Skonberg's garden on Spruce Island in May. Marie reports seed orders are keeping her very busy. This coming May, she is scheduled to be interviewed by Alaska Magazine. Wonderful! We will keep you posted and let you know when her article will be published.

PENNSYLVANIA

Doretta Klaber Chapter

The subject of February's meeting is seed sowing. Last year the chapter successfully planted many seeds from Sakata Seed Co., resulting in primrose plants at all the plant sales.

This year the meeting will emphasize species primula, including *Primula sieboldii*, which the chapter purchased from Paul Held when he spoke to the group last November.

WASHINGTON

Washington State Chapter

Meets the second Friday of each month, except July and August, in the United Good Neighbor Center, 305 South 43rd Street, Renton, (across the street from Valley General Hospital) at 7:45 p.m.

October Program: Steve Doonan of Grand Ridge Nursery talked about a mystery plant from Nepal — a primula whose red-stemmed leaves are gold on the back. He also discussed plants from the Nepal area as well as controlling root aphids and root weevils in primula propagation. Steve has had some success using a house plant crystal to control aphids on auriculas.

The November program by April Boettger was a

smash. She had slides from Dan Pederson and a five page handout on primula nomenclature that stressed the *Auricula* section and compared the naming of primula in books by John Richards and Josef Halda to the old accepted names.

December Program: Cy Happy presented a program about primulas.

Alan Jones reports that a product called "Get Off My Garden" may help keep cats out of your primula beds. The product, available at garden stores and pet stores, is harmless and smells of licorice and anise. Others report that orange peels may also do the job.

Don Keefe suggests that if the creeping rootstalks of your species *P. juliae* and your Julianas are exposed, they should be covered with soil or a mulch for winter protection. He found that the exposed creeping rootstalks of his plants disappeared completely. Don also suggests that you cover Sakata Juliana hybrid plants with conifer branches, or leaves, to prevent winter damage or loss.

Eastside Chapter

Meets the first Monday of every month at the University Savings Bank, 6615 132nd Avenue NE, Kirkland, the Bridal Trails Mall at 7:30 p.m.

November Program: Thea Oakley led an interesting discussion on species primulas.

December Program: Don Keefe presented a talk on Juliana primulas.

Tacoma Chapter

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

November program: Dan Pederson showed slides of primula from all over the world photographed by growers and collectors all over the country. Included are slides of older primula not commonly seen now.

continued on page 29

A Note from the Doretta Klaber Chapter

Sometimes, some days, things do work out right. The APS Doretta Klaber Chapter had such a day when 40 members met at my home on Saturday morning, February 11, 1995, for our third annual seed-sowing event. The weather, for the first time in years, was mild, and roads were dry despite the left over snow.

Thanks go out to the many people who made the event a success! Dee Peck brought a video showing the operation of an English primrose nursery, including all the intricacies of pin and thrum flowers. Then John Gyer produced his microscope and showed us the pins and thrums in detail. Now we all know we must cross-pollinate in order to produce viable seed on our plants.

Fred and Joann Knapp helped tremendously in setting up and keeping things running smoothly. Jan Slater brought some new label markers and her popular muffins.

A lively discussion took place with members sharing their successful and less successful methods of growing primroses. There was agreement that clay in some form (Turface, or a similar product) is beneficial for its water-retention properties. Agreement was also general that air must, nevertheless, be present for the roots. Ways of achieving these ends varied.

We planted over 65 species of *Primula* seed, some of these in several varieties. Seeds came

Photo by Fred Knapp



Nicholas Klise and Morris West sowing seeds at Plyler house.

Photo by Fred Knapp



Doretta Klaber Chapter members selecting their seeds.

from the American Primrose Society, including excess seed from the Seed Exchange kindly sent by Marie Skonberg in time for the meeting. Rosetta Jones, the North American Rock Garden Society, the Alpine Garden Society, Paul Held's new American Sakurasoh Association, June Skidmore for Field House Alpines and Andrew Osyany's Karmic Exotix Nursery were all additional sources. Members of the chapter eagerly sought out the seeds they most desired from this incredible array.

The treasurer of the chapter, Bill Siegel, has decided to retire. As far as I can determine from old records, Bill is the only treasurer the

chapter has ever had. Thank you, Bill, for all those years of faithful service. We won't complain if you retire, but we will if you no longer attend the meetings, because we will miss you. Dick Van Duzer has agreed to become the new treasurer.

Plans for upcoming events were discussed, including spring garden visits, a show, and, of course, our annual picnic and plant sale.

Dot Plyler, Chair
Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania ❖

Flower Show Volunteers Needed

The BC Primula Group is sponsoring a booth at the VanDusen Botanical Garden Flower Show in Vancouver, BC, June 2-4, 1995. Helpers are needed to man the booth for the show, which will be modeled after the famous Chelsea Flower Show. Volunteer by contacting John Kerridge, 4660 10th Ave. W., #1102, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6R 2J6.

Notes from the Editor

Information received at the Editor's desk

CATALOGS

New sources of primula seeds and plants have appeared over my desk in the past couple of months. It may be a bit late for seed but make a note of these and be ready to write in the fall for the catalogs for next year.

A PLETHORA OF PRIMULA

April Boettger of A Plethora of Primula has her second catalog out. April, in her new nursery, has many stock plants from Herb Dickson (who swears he will truly go to Missouri to be near his daughters this summer) and from Larry Bailey, though not all are available yet.

Perusing the catalog one finds many useful notes on cultivation and tips for growing primroses and auriculas. You may want the catalog, which is \$1 US, just for the information.

There is a wide color range of garden auriculas to choose from and another group, called the Petite Hybrids, originating with Herb Dickson, sound useful for troughs.

The handsome deep lavender — a fine color — form of *Primula marginata*, named for Herb Dickson, is listed. There are even some exhibition auriculas, show selfs, alpines and one green-edged. More named auriculas will be released each year.

Plants of a number of species are found here, too. Some old friends, like 'Quaker Bonnet' and some of the newly available doubles are listed. Please remember the nursery is not open to the public, but you will have a fine time reading the catalog.

Write to A Plethora of Primula, 244 West Side Highway, Vader, WA 98593.

THOMPSON & MORGAN

Have you seen the listing for primula seed in the catalog of Thompson & Morgan — American edition? The color photos are enough to make the effort worthwhile. There are many hybrids in a rainbow of colors and a number of species. Of special note is the green-house species, *Primula malacoides* and *Primula obconica* in two strains. It is not always easy to find these. There are also gold-laced polyanthus listed.

The listing to draw the most comments is for 'Cowichan' polyanthus. Thompson & Morgan claim it was their seed from which the plant, originating in the Cowichan Valley, was grown — the same scrap of a plant that gave Florence Bellis enough pollen with which to launch her inestimable program of hybridizing 'Cowichan' color strains. At T&M you can get five selected colors or a mix. The photos I have seen promise sturdy, beautifully colored plants. APS will also pursue T&M's information on the origin of the seed that ended up in the Cowichan Valley, following up on the information from Sybil McCulloch and John Kerridge, printed in earlier issues of the quarterly. For a catalog, write to Thompson & Morgan, P.O. Box 1308, Jackson, NJ 08527-03008.

ARROWHEAD ALPINES

Here is another catalog I had not seen before. Arrowhead Alpines has two catalogs — seeds and plants. The primula seed list is a page and a half of very small single line entries of hybrids and species. The 'Wanda Hybrids' are here, though at \$8 US per package you may want to share with a friend. The theory is that if they can't find a cheaper seed source, we probably can't either and this may be true.

Some of the many species are more reasonable at \$2 and \$3 per packet, and include the harder to find Asiatics and a variety of European species. It would be interesting to know their seed sources — I think they grow some of their own seed.

The plant catalog has well over 60 listings, including, coincidentally the three color ranges of *Primula alpicola* featured in the "Plant Portrait" this issue. The number of species plants is impressive. The price is approximately \$4.50 per plant, with some higher. For these catalogs, write to Arrowhead Alpines, P.O. Box 857, Fowlerville, MI 48836.

DRAWINGS

Having mentioned one attractive set of drawings of *Primula* on the cover of the Gardens North catalog, I have to mention another, done by one of our APS members. Were any of you the lucky recipients of a notecard by Misty Haffner, with the Alaska group? Misty has done a set of notecards with a different drawing on each: an alpine auricula, *P. japonica* and *P. cuneifolia* alba whose habitat does include Alaska. The drawings are clean and crisp and quite evocative of the subject. I hope you do more, Misty — they're beautiful.



Candelabra primula.
Drawing by Misty Haffner.

GARDENS NORTH

Another catalog arrived with a cover of lovely primrose drawings. Gardens North is a catalog of seeds from a Canadian company that lists a select number of species (10 in all) including a mix from Tony Williams' garden, illustrator of the cover. The wild primroses of Europe and Asia are here along with a lot of other perennial seeds. The address is: Gardens North, 5984 Third Line Road North, RR #3, North Gower, Ontario, Canada K0A 2T0

BOOK SOURCE

Here's another one for your list of sources of second-hand or out-of-print books: Calendula Rare Books. Heiko Miles' card indicates this shop specializes in books on gardening, horticulture, botany and related subjects. Maybe they have books on primulas. The address is: 43 SW First St., Chehalis, WA 98532.

SPHAGNUM MOSS

This is a little late, as I received the notice last year, but do you remember there was a scare in the gardening world about a fungus that caused ulcerous skin lesions and was found in sphagnum moss?

The circular I have, from the Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association explains that the fungus is found in living sphagnum moss, often used to line wire baskets. The dry sphagnum peat moss used by gardeners to add organic material to the garden does not carry the fungus. If you need more information, contact me for the address of the Association.

TASHA TUDOR'S GARDEN

An attractive new book by Tasha Tudor, a long time APS member, has given a boost to the American Primrose Society. The color photographs are luscious and one of the societies mentioned in the list at the back is the APS. Some new members have found us through this listing. Do find the book and take a look — it has some find color montages.

continued on page 25

Journal Report

by Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

ABOUT AURICULAS

As usual, the 1994 **Yearbook** of the National Auricula and Primula Society (Northern Section) contains a wealth of information, particularly for the grower interested in auriculas.

Ken Bowser reported improved size and flower form when he planted his alpine auriculas in a soilless mix, with a bit of Biosorb added, and fertilized with 1/8 strength 20-20-20 fertilizer and Phostrogen twice in September, once in February and again in early March. Similar plants grown in a soil-based mix, like John Innes No. 1, and fertilized in the spring had flowers of low quality form. He theorized that the latter plants had too much food in the soil-based mix and subsequent fertilization, thereby causing an imbalance in nutrients at the time of bud set.

Tim Coop, a grower and hybridizer of self and edged auriculas, was anxiously watching the seedlings of a grey edged cross. So far, the blooming seedlings have given the usual ratio of 1/3 pin-eyed edged, 1/3 thrum-eyed edged and 1/3 selfs. It would be interesting to know the genetics of such crosses.

A fascinating tour through the history of self auriculas was described in three articles. R. Taylor recounts the founding of the National Auricula Society in the late 1800s. In a second article, he traces the history of the self auriculas from 1620. D. Hadfield notes the changes in named varieties shown in recent years.

Several pieces on self auriculas make the reader want to rush off an order for all the named varieties. Hybridization tips were given, but unfortunately many of those named are not readily available on this side of the Atlantic. However, for the self auricula enthusiast who is planning a trip (or order) to England, Trevor Newton tells what to look for in a good self and lists several of his recommended varieties.

For those interested in joining one of the N.A.P.S. groups, the addresses are listed in the back of **Primroses**. For information on twinning with a member of the Northern Section, contact Dennis Oakley, 10060 Dennis Place, Richmond, B.C. V7A 3G8 Canada.

ABOUT AWARDS

The December, 1994, **Bulletin** of the Alpine Garden Society described plants given awards

in 1993 and 1994. Four primulas were among the recipients.

An Award of Merit was given to *Primula marginata* 'Shipton'. The wavy, crinkled edges of its petals are unique among the marginata cultivars.

Primula elatior ssp. *pseudoelatior* also earned an Award of Merit. This subspecies is similar to ssp. *leucophylla* except that the leaves have a heart-shaped base. Both subspecies come from the mountains near the southeastern corner of the Black Sea. Both are much more dwarf and mat-forming than the European oxlip.

Primula petiolaris 'Redpoll' not only received an Award of Merit, but was also illustrated in the **Bulletin** in full color. (Wow!) The flowers literally covered the leaves. According to the grower, J. Dennis, there were about 250 flowers per plant.

A Preliminary Commendation was given to *Primula vulgaris* ssp. *balearica*. This subspecies has large, pure-white flowers and a marvelous scent. Even the leaves are fragrant when they are handled or crushed. It is native to Mallorca and, according to John Richards, may also be found in North Africa.

ABOUT 'COWICHANS'

'Cowichan' primroses are featured in the latest Thompson & Morgan seed catalog. Packets are available in separate colors or in a mix. The description of the strain includes the statement that "In the 1930's Mr. Neel of the Anglo-Canadian community of Cowichan Valley selected a deep purple-red primrose with no eye and red tinged foliage - out of seed purchased from T&M ... and the Cowichan Strain was born." Does anyone know more about this claim by T&M? ❖

Notes from the Editor

continued from page 23

PLANT PARTNER

Thompson & Morgan are sponsoring a program for gardeners to enrol and grow for trial selected varieties of flower and vegetable seeds. There is a fee, and you are asked to complete tally sheets at all stages of growth. If you are interested, write to Thompson & Morgan, care of Bruce Sangster, Dept. PP, Jackson, N.J. 08527

GARDEN DIRECTORY

The Garden Conservancy association has launched a private garden directory, **The Garden Conservancy Open Days Directory**, available in March, 1995. The press release says the directory will feature private gardens in Connecticut, and Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties in New York that will be open to the public on selected Sundays, May to September. The directory will be expanded nation wide by the year 2000.

Each listing includes a description of the garden, travel directions and when the garden is open. There will be a \$4 fee to visit the garden. The proceeds go to the Garden Conservancy.

For a copy of the directory, write to The Garden Conservancy, P.O. Box 219, Cold Spring, NY 10516 and send \$8 US or members \$5.

Victoria Flower & Garden Festival
A garden show with display gardens — a sweet pea competition, a rustic willow-featured garden, a Victorian perennial border, a whimsical vegetable garden, a window box garden — is to be held in Victoria, B.C., July 7 - 9, 1995. There will be guest lecturers — including John Brookes from England — and a gardener's market. For more information contact Chris Campbell, Festival Manager, 90 Falmouth Rd., Victoria, B.C. Canada. ❖

A Journal Reporter Needed — Desperately!

Do you get copies of the alpine gardening journals — the North American Rock Garden Society, the Alpine Garden Society from England or the Scottish Rock Garden Society? Or would you like to, in return for reading through them for information on primula?

This job is open, and a volunteer is needed. The APS will arrange for the society's copy of the journal to be sent to you. Please contact Ann Lunn on the APS Editorial Committee if you would be interested in helping this way. You also get to read the journals, remember!

Write to: Ann Lunn
6620 NW 271st Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97124

Board of Directors' Meeting

Held January 28, 1995 at the Beaverton Mall, Oregon

This is a summary of the board meeting minutes.

The president read a letter from the Alaska Group indicating that they will remain separate rather than become an APS chapter at this time. Glen Spurrell of Toronto, Ontario has been appointed to the board.

A special presentation was made by Steve Hootman from the Rhododendron Species Foundation. APS was asked to become an associate member. A motion was made to have the three Chapter presidents in the area of the Foundation garden put a proposal together for the April meeting.

Ann Lunn reported for the Editor Search Committee. The search for a coordinating editor was continuing. A number of people have offered to help with typing and proofreading. The editor reported that the Winter issue was expected for mailing approximately mid-February. She asked that Herb Dickson be exempted from any further charges for ads in the quarterly in recognition of his support of APS over the years. Approved.

The executive is still looking for a Membership Chairman. Memberships continue to come in, but more than 100 members did not renew.

Twelve people are now involved in the twinning program.

The treasurer circulated a report. Correspondence from Paul Held indicates he has started the American Sakurasoh Association.

Marie Skonberg, Seed Exchange Coordinator, sent a report that over half of the seed orders have been filled in the seed exchange. Judging Coordinator, Rosetta Jones asked that plants be brought for the judging class to be held in conjunction with the national show. Don Keefe, Round Robin Coordinator, sent a report saying he has two Robins circulating.

Librarian Thea Oakley reports she has the Brenda Hyatt book on auriculas available.

Cheryl Fluck in Alaska has received, via barge shipment, and organized the 23 boxes of old quarterlies. They will now be available. A report was sent from the Slide Librarian, John O'Brien. Volunteers are needed for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle. Chapter presidents reported.

Respectfully submitted,
Dorothy Springer,
Recording Secretary ❖

Some Dilemmas of a Primroser

continued from page 8

garden center. A major clean-up was required: removal of any top dressing left and more potting soil. But some of the plants did win awards, so the effort saved the day. I am reminded of this every year when cleaning up plants for shows. But I have learned. Most plants are grown in the ground now. Although sheltered as much as possible, splashes from the

rain still occur, especially on the underside of the leaves.

Such are some of the dilemmas of this primrose grower. If forewarning can help anyone, so much the better. One learns by tips from other growers, and other peoples' experience. ❖

Slide Librarian Report

by John O'Brien, Juneau, Alaska

In November our program on auriculas was shown here in Juneau. This program has been enhanced by nine slides of named show auriculas, courtesy of NAPS (Northern and West Section) in England. Additionally, several scenes of named auriculas have been added, courtesy of a Canadian donor. Some more slides of named auriculas are expected soon from the British primrose societies, and there is still a likelihood of named auricula slides from Pacific Northwest donors.

In January, the Skagway Garden Club hosted a showing of our slide program "Wild and Tame Primroses of Alaska." Although Skagway is a smaller community, there was a full attendance at the home economics room in the attractive Skagway School. Skagway is known for its many beautiful summer gardens.

Also in January, a beautiful slide program on English and Scottish primrose shows and gardens received a large attendance at Juneau. These slides were loaned us by June Skidmore and we express our sincere appreciation.

We have a video on micro-propagation on loan to a member in Ohio.

The APS slide library has available for loan to members, at modest fee, four different slide programs and six videos.

The slide programs are:

1. Standard APS slide program covering many different kinds of primroses.
2. Wild and tame primroses of Alaska.
3. Auriculas
4. Tall, mid-summer blooming primroses.

The video programs are from the 1992 "Primula Worldwide" symposium and cover several subjects and several areas of the world.

The slide library would like to grow! APS growers, if you have some fine plants this spring, please take slides and send to the slide librarian.

Sincerely,
John A. O'Brien, Sr., Juneau, Alaska
(907)789-7516 ❖



APS Annual Summer Picnic

Bring your own basket!

Saturday, July 8th, 1995
At Thelma Genheimer's
7100 SW 209th
Beaverton, Oregon

Please contact your chapter officers for time and directions.

Sakurasoh Obsession, Continued

by Paul Held, Westport, Connecticut

The Fall, 1993, issue that included my article on *Primula sieboldii* ("How to become obsessed growing *Primula sieboldii*," p. 18) also contained a membership list arranged by country. I decided to write to the eleven APS members listed in Japan. I asked if they had any *Primula sieboldii* they would be willing to trade. Happily, I received replies from two-thirds of them, although most stated they did not have seed. They explained seed is not saved from Sakurasoh, but plants are shared with friends when there are too many for the pot.

One member sent my letter to a famous Japanese nursery, Kamo, which no longer sells *Primula sieboldii* but was trying to improve their strain and we exchanged a good bit of seed. Another member suggested I write to Sakata Seed Company, which I did. Unfortunately, they no longer sell *Primula sieboldii* seed but they sent the addresses of three Sakurasoh societies. I promptly sent inquiries.

The chairperson of one responded: he had given my letter to one of their members and said I would receive a package shortly. The next day I received a small package which contained 57 packets of seed, each identified with a hybrid name in Japanese and an English translation. There were 25 to 150 seeds in each packet. I was in heaven! I sent a large amount of my seed in exchange. All this happened and it was only the end of March, 1994.

All the seed received from the Kamo Nursery germinated but, alas, no germination from the packets from the Sakurasoh society member. I wrote to him, thanking him for his generosity and mentioning no germination to date, and he replied he would send fresh seed, when

available. Sure enough, in July, more packets of seed — all from named hybrids — arrived; first one package with 50 hand-made envelopes, then another, and, finally, a third.

When the *Primula sieboldii* were in full flower in May, Fred Knapp, APS board member, visited my garden with a group from the Long Island Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. He invited me to give a talk on *Primula sieboldii* to the Doretta Klaber Chapter, APS's only eastern chapter. This gave me the incentive, along with all the seed I have saved from my own collection and the seed from Japan, to start the American Sakurasoh Association.

But membership has strings. I send each new member 250 *Primula sieboldii* seed with the expectation that they will grow this and have at least 50 plants with merit. As part of the Association, I would like to form a committee to receive and register names for forms with outstanding merit. The characteristics of petal shape, color, form, the amount of laciniation on the petal, and other details, will all be recorded and described. Then the named plant could be distributed. The association would help members with trading plants. It should be fun.

In Japan, there are more than 500 varieties of Sakurasoh, named forms of *Primula sieboldii*, described and selected from the 16th century onwards — over 300 years. Sakurasoh, once a selected form is identified by a grower, is registered, and only registered plants can be distributed. My friend who sent the packets of seed has a Sakurasoh collection of over 400 plants.

In September, 1994, I decided to send him some of my favorite selected forms. I learned a lot about exporting plants! With all the right forms

and labels, I sent off a package of resting buds. I also learned about importing requirements and sent this information to my friend in Japan.

Then, lo, in November, I received a package of named hybrids. A few days later and another package arrived, and finally a third. An inventory list accompanied the resting buds. A note apologized that in the spring I would not see the flowers, but I should have a plant. There are not many named Sakurasoh in North America, but now there are more.

At the Doretta Klaber Chapter meeting in October, 1994, three APS members joined my newly formed association. Some wished that I had *Primula sieboldii* plants to sell, but that means you would not have the delight of raising your own plants.

It is this lure of discovering a new, wonderful and unique variety of *Primula sieboldii* from seed you have raised yourself that is the pleasure for me of raising these plants. It is a thrill, and an obsession.

What will happen to the American Sakurasoh Association? How well will members do? I don't know. I plan to have a registration process for new forms of *Primula sieboldii*. I hope that someday we will be able to set up a display of fine forms of *Primula sieboldii* on a small stage, as they do in Japan in spring, to admire and enjoy the selected forms. Maybe others will become obsessed, like I am. The seeds of change are available now, from the American Sakurasoh Association. ❖

News from the Chapters

continued from page 19

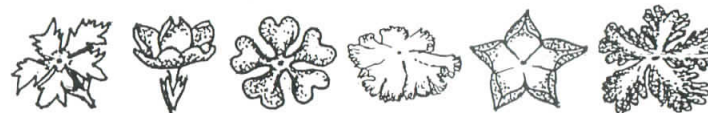
BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia Primrose Group

January Meeting: A program on "Seed Planting" featured two excellent speakers. Bodil Leamy, the new curator of E.H. Lohbruner Alpine Garden, gave an account of the method used at UBC Botanical Gardens. Renee Oakley broke everyone up by

saying, "I don't do any of that," then proceeded to show her method using small styrofoam packs obtained from the friendly manager of her local supermarket's meat department. Details of both speakers' methods will be featured in a later *Primroses* issue. ❖

Join the American Sakurasoh Association (Primula Sieboldii)

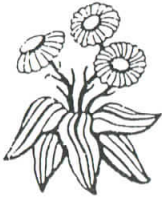


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Society Notes

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.

National Auricula and Primula Society

Invites all auricula and primula lovers to join in this old society.
Membership includes yearbook.

Northern Section

D.G. Hadfield
146 Queens Road, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, England

Midland and West Section

Peter Ward
6 Lawson Close, Saltford, Bristol, England BS18 1BG

Southern Section

Lawrence E. Wigley
67 Warnham Court Road, Carshalton Beeches, Surrey, England

American Primrose Society Bookstore

APS members are able to get special prices on these beautiful new books:

Auriculas, by Brenda Hyatt - \$13US

Primulas, the Complete Guide (softcover), by Mary A. Robinson - \$15US

A Plantsman's Guide to Primulas, by Philip Swindells - \$15US

Primula, by John Richards - \$36US

Address your orders and inquiries to:

Thea Oakley, American Primrose Society Librarian
3304 288th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98053 USA

Orders must be prepaid in US dollars by check on a US bank or by international money order.
Add postage and handling: \$3US for the first book in US and \$1.50 for each additional book, or \$5 for the first book outside US and \$2.50 for each additional book abroad.

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9450 Herbert Place, Juneau, AK 99801

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Canada V6M 2N2

Good Reading

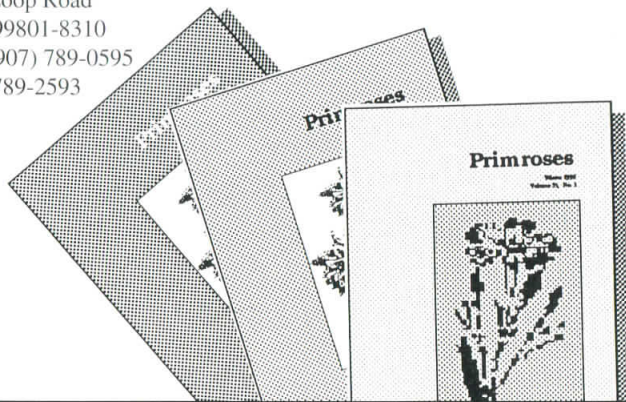
There is a gold mine of *Primula* information to be found in past issues of the quarterly. Read articles with secrets of *Primula* success by some of the foremost growers and APS members: Florence Bellis, Rae Berry, Ivy Agee.

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:

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See list included
with this issue.



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MEMBERSHIP

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.

Primroses

Spring 1995
Volume 53, No. 2

