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# Primroses

Volume 55, No. 3 Summer 1997





## American Primrose Society

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## President's Message

'Sumer is icumen in'\* — and I hope you will all enjoy a good one. As another APS year begins, I look forward to a successful year ahead and welcome aboard our new Officers and Board members. My thanks go to all the previous Officers who have helped the Society enormously during the past year.

The National Show in April hosted by the Tacoma group was a great success and it was good to see the 'esprit de corps' between the various Chapters that participated. Although it was not a large Show, the quality of the plants was high. Rosetta Jones, well known for her double primulas, won Best of Show for an amber double auricula — an outstanding plant. John Kerridge, who specializes in Gold Lace primulas, won the Growers Exhibit with a fine pot of these attractive plants.

It was good to see members exhibiting plants for the first time — including our Editor, Claire Cockcroft, who won the Novice Award. Hopefully next year when the National Show is held in the Seattle area, more new members will bench plants and join in the fun. A number of members from Juneau, Alaska, attended the show, as well as members from Eastern Washington, British Columbia, and as far away as New York. Garden tours were also arranged during the weekend and these were enjoyed by a number of people.

As the year goes on I encourage members to save seed for next year's Seed Exchange. This is an important feature of the of the APS and we are hoping to offer more interesting and hard to find seed for our members. I am happy to announce that the Seed Exchange will be going to Juneau, Alaska, this coming year — in the capable hands of Pat Wilson, who has agreed to be Chairman. The Society thanks her.

Again I would like to stress that articles are always needed for the Quarterly and that the Board appreciates any feedback as to which features have been most enjoyed. Suggestions are always welcomed.

June Skidmore, Mercer Island, Washington ❀

\* from Cuckoo Song C.1250

## Primroses

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Volume 55 Number 3 Summer 1997

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### COVER PHOTO

Dæhnfeldt's *Primula malacoides* F1 hybrid 'Prima' series in carmine rose, pink, lilac, and white.

— Photo courtesy of Dæhnfeldt Inc.

## Primroses

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### EDITORIAL DEADLINES

Winter issue — November 15  
Spring issue — February 15  
Summer issue — May 15  
Fall issue — August 15

### PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

All photos are credited.

*Primroses* (ISSN 0162-6671) is published quarterly by the American Primrose Society, Primula and Auricula Society, 41801 SW Burgarsky Rd, Gaston, OR 97119. Membership in the Society includes a subscription to the *Primroses*. Seed Exchange privileges, Slide Library privileges and the opportunity to join a Round Robin. Dues for individual or household membership in the American Primrose Society, domestic and foreign, are \$20 U.S. per calendar year (\$21 for renewals postmarked after January 1); \$55 for three years; or \$275 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. Periodical postage paid at Hillsboro, OR, and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Please send address changes to *Primroses*, 41801 SW Burgarsky Rd, Gaston, OR 97119.

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 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.



# Fairy Primroses

By Beth Tait, Bothell, Washington

[Ed. note: This article first appeared in "Plants Alive", October, 1975. Plant popularity can rise and fall; perhaps it's time to take another look at an old, sometimes overlooked favorite.]

*Primula malacoides*, sometimes called the fairy primrose, is a dainty, graceful plant. It has a rosette of basal leaves, each leaf consisting of an ovate to oblong blade, slightly lobed or toothed, sustained by petioles of about twice its length. Some varieties have slightly hairy leaves. Farina (a powdery white meal) appears in abundance on most forms of *P. malacoides*, especially on the lower leaf surfaces, the scapes, and the inner surface of the calyx lobes.

The height of the bloom stalk (scape) is about 12 to 16 inches, depending on the variety. By the time the successive whorls of flowers reach the top, making the appearance of one circle of flowers on top of another circle, each bloom on a separate pedicel circling around the main stalk, a most attractive plant appears.

## OLD AND NEW VARIETIES

The original species had a lavender pink blossom, and was introduced to England in 1908 by the great plant hunter Forrest, who had found it on one of his trips to Burma, in the mountain area of Yunnan in the year 1884. Recognizing *P. malacoides* as a superb greenhouse plant, English, German, and French horticulturists started hybridizing and came up with quality varieties. Sutton & Sons of England did a tremendous job.

Some of the modern varieties produce blossoms an inch and a quarter in diameter, and also doubles, which seem to be so much in demand these days. They come in many shades.

The size of the plant itself has been greatly enlarged by hybridizing, without detracting from the grace and delicacy of the original habit.

Photo by Claire Cockcroft



The secret of success in growing fairy primroses is to provide them with perfectly cool, moist conditions.

*Primula malacoides* arrived in Boston in the year 1914, and the florists in California soon discovered it. Now this primula is considered one of the best blooming spring bedding plants.

This plant is easy to grow, and also popular because of how rapidly it attains the flowering stage. *P. malacoides* also possesses the great virtue that it is suitable for cool or heated greenhouses.

There are about thirty named *malacoides* varieties. Some are: 'Rose Queen', 'Princess Mary', 'Duchess of Kent', 'James Box', and 'Sutton's Eclipse'. 'Peter Pan' is a dwarf variety, and there are several doubles. 'Atropurpurea' is a remarkable variety, with flowers deep pink changing to crimson and finally almost maroon. This strain is gigantic in bloom size.

## SEEDS AND POTTING

*Primula malacoides* is easily raised from seed. Be sure you buy the best seed you can get; then your efforts won't be in vain. July seeding brings Christmas bloom.

When seed has been stored, it's best to freeze the seed. Open the package, add a couple of drops of water, close the package, and place in the freezing compartment of your refrigerator. The water will keep the seed from freeze drying, sapping the life from seeds. Your object is to freeze the seed and crack the hard little shell. Mother Nature does that by frosts in winter.

After the third day, remove from the refrigerator and sprinkle the seed over the top of the soil that you had prepared for this purpose. Use a 6-inch clay pot that has been washed and soaked overnight in water (a wet pot will not take all the moisture out of your soil).

## Sowing Seeds

- Before planting primrose seed, moisten and place in freezer for three days to crack the shell.
- After sprinkling seed on top of the soil, add just enough soil to keep seed from sticking to the paper you'll apply next.
- Cover the soil with a paper towel, leaving the edges turned up. Keep the towel moist until seed germination takes place.

Fill the pot with a mixture of ° peat moss, ~ garden soil, ~ washed sand. You may sterilize the soil in the oven if you wish; a couple of hours at 350°F should do it. I never bother, as weeds usually grow faster than any man-planted seed, and I pull those out.

After you have filled the pot, firm the soil, and fill again until soil is within 2 inches of the top. Now you sprinkle the seed on top of the soil, then a light peppering of soil — not enough to cover the seed, but just enough to keep the seed from sticking to the paper towel you're going to put on next.

Place a paper towel on top of the soil with the edges sticking up. The towel will look like a large cup. This is where you will pour a cup of warm water for three mornings in a row. Thereafter, keep the towel wet at all times until germination. Once dried out, you might as well forget it, as your germination has stopped.

Keep the pot in a 60 to 65°F room. In a week or so, lift the paper towel to see if the seeds have germinated. You will notice the sprout or white tail on the



seed; this white sprout will turn and go into the soil, raising the seed capsule into the air. It's fascinating.

## GROWING ON

Now that the seedlings are on their way, remove the towel. Place the pot in a shallow container that will hold water, as you will be watering from the bottom so as not to disturb the little seedlings. Do not place in bright sun, as the seedlings are so tender they will burn up, but they do need light and also ventilation.

In the first watering from the bottom, use a little Captan for damp-off, as now is your fungus danger time. Do not drown your little plants, but just see to it that the soil is not dried out.

It's time to transplant when the seedlings have three or four true leaves. Lift them gently from the pot, using a sharp pencil. You may remove several at a time, as they are easily divided once out. Transplant into 2-inch pots. When they have outgrown these, use 5-inch pots for their permanent home. Use the same potting media, but add some well-decayed cow manure, ground-up or a slow-release type fertilizer. Or water with a liquid fertilizer solution every two weeks. Water in between with plain water as needed, but never overwater.

Just before blooming time, leave the plant a little on the dry side. And be sure there is good air circulation around the plant, as the leaves are so dense at the base that excess moisture can't escape and may cause trouble. Even if the plant should flag a little, you can water and it will soon be back to normal.

A well-grown specimen in a 5-inch pot is an object of great beauty, and a desirable addition to any collection of

greenhouse plants. In order to grow a specimen plant, care should be taken to keep the plant at a slightly lower temperature than is commonly used in growing *P. malacoides* on, at least until an elaborate root system and a voluminous mass of foliage has been developed. The vigorous center scape which first appears should be pinched out, making it possible for the many lateral scapes that appear somewhat later to come to the flowering stage at approximately the same time.

No effort should be made to force a prized *P. malacoides*, as the more slowly it grows, the longer it will remain in flower and the bigger and brighter will be the flowers.

*Primula malacoides* is also a most enjoyable plant for the home. If your home has a lack of humidity, which often turns the tips of the leaves brown, place the plant and pot into a fancy container that has crushed rock or pebbles in the bottom, about two inches deep. Allow some moisture to sit in this pebble well, but not enough so that the plant's roots get overwatered through the drainage hole.

When you tire of your plant in the summer months, it can be planted outside in semishade, to be brought back in when fall comes. An easy method is to just sink the pot in the ground; that way, all you have to do is lift it, clean the plant and pot, take all the dead stalks off, fertilize, and bring it indoors.

## SEED SOURCES

Seed sources and plant varieties have changed quite a bit since this story was originally published. Please turn to page 15 for "Finding Non-Hardy Primroses". ❁

# 'Old Irish Green'

by Maedythe Martin, Victoria, British Columbia

Years ago, Cy Happy brought me a small auricula plant on one of his trips to Victoria to judge primulas at the alpine plant show. "Here, put this in your auricula bed", he said. I had been growing auriculas for three or four years by then. I had already killed the border 'Blue Velvet' (have it again now) but I still had Drake's 'Bronze, No. 8' (alas, long gone to the garden in the sky!). So into the auricula bed went the small plant from Cy Happy, 'Old Irish Green'.

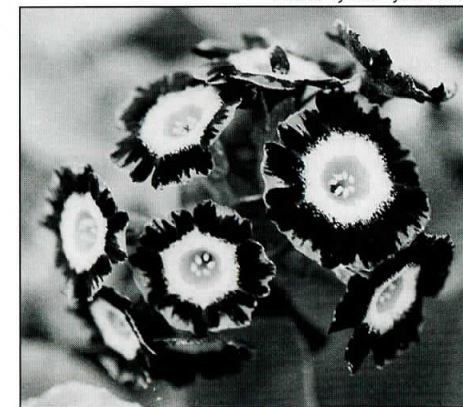
From Victoria, a few years later, we moved to Toronto. The auriculas went off to a good home for baby-sitting. We knew we would be back, someday. But even a year without auriculas was too much. When I arrived back in Victoria two years later, in 1980, it was with a suitcase full of seedling 'Gordon Douglas' and other auriculas. (See "Primroses Under Lights", *Primroses*, Spring, 1979, pp. 32-33 for my experiment growing them in Toronto.) They were individually wrapped in newspaper, in a big plastic bag inside a hard-sided suitcase, and made the 3,500 mile trip in fine form.

'Old Irish Green', reclaimed from the babysitter, went into the new auricula frame along with the new seedlings. The new frame was great — four feet by ten feet, with an edge sturdy enough to sit on and weed. Too bad I didn't get to the weeding as often as it needed to be done. 'Old Irish Green' suffered through the chickweed crisis of 1983. [See page 9.] But it made it! This just goes to show it is hardy and tolerant — surviving a move, baby-sitting, and the chickweed crisis.

'Old Irish Green' survived and flourished, making a huge clump by 1994. There is a photo of the large pot in *Primroses*, Summer, 1993, p.19. Up to this point I had merely grown and enjoyed it. I gave away offsets to friends for their garden. It is one of the few green-edged auriculas that requires no fussing or special care.

I think you would have to call it a garden auricula. Despite the green edge, the dark red, almost black ground and the clear white eye, the edges where each of these colors meet are not well enough defined for a true show auricula. The habit of the plant is fine, the stem is strong, and 'Old Irish Green' makes offsets readily enough — after all, it is still with me some 20 years later. And if you grow a single offset in a pot of good compost, it will reward you with flowers the size of a quarter, and ten to a dozen flowers on the flower stem.

Photos by Maedythe Martin



Old Irish Green makes a full head of flowers, some showing the extra small petal at the center — a dead give-away of genes for double flowers.

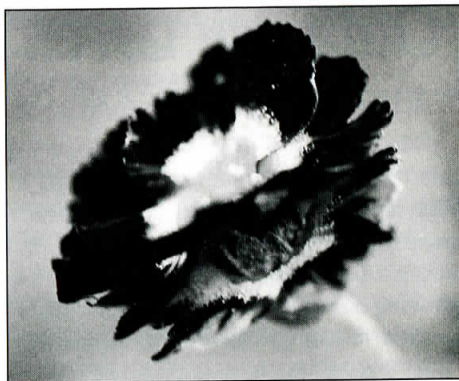


*'Old Irish Green' continued*

So where did it originate? Cy Happy hybridized it, using pollen from an auricula flower sent to him from Miss Winnifred Wynne in Ireland, with whom he corresponded. Miss Wynne was known as an accomplished grower in her time, and had collected many old auriculas. Among others, she had the old 'Double Green', the semi-double striped 'Mrs. Dargen' and 'Osborne Green', found in a cottage garden. (See the NAPS (Northern Section) **Yearbook**, 1951, New Series No. 2.) 'Osborne Green' is another green-edged auricula without the fine points of a show auricula, and has a purple ground. It was pollen from 'Osborne Green' that I suspect Cy Happy used to create 'Old Irish Green'.

Lurking beneath the innocent green edged flower of 'Old Irish Green' are genes that I discovered to be very useful in a pollinating program. It took me until 1993 to actually get seed set and collected from my auriculas. One of the crosses that year included 'Old Irish Green'. Imagine my surprise when some of the plants turned out semi-double — even green-edged semi-double. And what's more, there is a tendency to stripe somewhere in there.

The doubling and the striping tendencies are not a complete surprise, for if you look closely at the flowers, you can see the vestigial petal in the center of some flowers — a dead giveaway that the gene for doubling is present. Also the irregular edge of the black (well, dark red) ground color that strays into the outside band of green petals may indicate the tendency to stripe. One of the crazy semi-double auriculas that appeared in the progeny of



The hose-in-hose flower, a surprise on the 1997 plant.

'Old Irish Green' has a striped white, green, and dark burgundy-red double flower. It has a terrible tendency to droop its head, though, so I am now raising the first generation of seedlings from it in hopes of the same stripes, but a better, sturdier stem.

'Old Irish Green' surprised me once again this year. After I realized it has interesting genes, I find myself looking at the flowers much more closely now. And what did I see this year, but a hose-in-hose flower! There is a complete green-edged flower inside another. Wow, do you think we could isolate this phenomenon? Imagine a complete plant of green-edged hose-in-hose flowers. I can hear the staunch edged show auricula growers groaning now. But those of us who like the unusual and anomalous are in seventh heaven at the prospect.

'Old Irish Green' is not an exotic. It is available now in Alaska and in Victoria, and maybe even in the Tacoma area still. Ask around, or write to the author if you are keen to grow this unusual auricula. There are probably more surprises in there waiting for a determined hybridizer. ❀

## Maedythe Martin in Alaska

By John A. O'Brien, Sr., Juneau, Alaska

Almost fifty people attended a luncheon and presentation on auricula primroses by Maedythe Martin held on March 15, in Juneau, Alaska. Maedythe spoke on the history of auricula primroses, the different kinds, cultivation and how to grow them, and cross-pollinating. Viewers were treated to a slide of a wild auricula in the Austrian mountains, scenes of the Duchess of Beaufort's garden, prominent early growers of auriculas assembled in their best clothes with top hats, and slices of several auriculas, including striped kinds.

Weather outside was sunny with a sparkling, blue sky, but still in the grips of late winter, with snow and ice covering most of the ground yet in Juneau. Quickly lengthening days gave promise of spring arriving soon in the North, but it would still be two months after Maedythe's talk until garden

Photo by John A. O'Brien, Sr.



Maedythe Martin, all bundled up.

auriculas bloom here. Having programs helps Alaskans get through our long winters.

Everyone, including the speaker, reported enjoying the program, and were glad they came. ❀

### *The Chickweed Crisis by Maedythe Martin*

#### **OR, DON'T DO THIS TO YOUR AURICULAS...**

In the 1980s, in the midst of growing auriculas as a serious occupation, I went back to graduate school. University, a nine-year old daughter, and a husband and home pretty much used up all my free time. But I loved the auriculas and managed to get out to the cold frame several times a year. In the spring I heavily top-dressed the auriculas, greedy feeders that they are, with compost, fresh from the nearby pile.

Everything grew very well. Particularly the chickweed! The next time I got out to the cold frame, I had chickweed two feet tall, with leaves the size of spinach — a cold frame full of it. The chickweed had covered the poor auriculas completely. Once I weeded out the chickweed, barely half the auriculas could be found at the bottom of the green chasm. 'Old Irish Green' must be a fighter, though, for it was one of the ones that survived the Chickweed Crisis of 1983 ❀



## Ontario Notes

By Glen Spurrell, Toronto, Ontario

Gerald Taaffe sent me the article "No Downtime for Birdseye Primulas" the other day; in a slightly longer version it appeared in the April, 1997, Newsletter of the Ottawa Valley Chapter of the North American Rock Garden Society. It was so good to see something being written on primulas from our harsher regions that I thought I would add my own experiences in Toronto to those of Gerald's in Ottawa.

*Primula frondosa* is probably the first primula I ever grew, and because of its ease and beauty I still love it. I am a very lazy waterer and I appreciate Gerald's line about "soil that never stays dry for long". I find this group very tolerant of some dryness. And despite my giving it less than ideal conditions, I have not found *P. frondosa* short-lived.

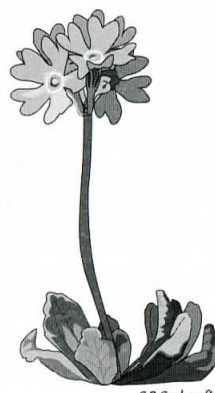
*Primula laurentiana* is another excellent member of the birdseyes. I wince a little when Gerald calls it "a Gaspé native", but that's just my



*Primula halleri*

Newfoundland roots talking. I saw great swatches of it in Newfoundland two summers ago growing in meadow conditions on cliffs overlooking the ocean. I sent seed into the exchanges and have myself some very good plants of it that should bloom this spring. In its native glory its flowering scapes were definitely not disproportionately long. *Primula mistassinica*, which I have also grown, has overly long scapes. My experience with it mirrors Gerald's.

Here are other members of this group I have tried: *P. farinosa*, *P. halleri*, *P. luteola*, and *P. darialica*. They were all easy from seed. I can offer few comments on these because of the way plants move or disappear in my garden and my poor note-keeping. But I mourn the loss of *P. halleri* and have some healthy seedlings in my greenhouses window at this moment as replacements. It is a beauty and quite different from the other group members. There was a good plant portrait in the Quarterly several issues ago. ❀



*Primula mistassinica*

## No Downtime for Birdseye Primulas

by Gerald Taaffe, Ottawa, Ontario

The game little tribe of birdseye primulas (subgenus *Aleuritia*, section *Aleuritia*, formerly *Farinosae*) includes native and exotic species that have something to offer cold-climate gardeners all year round. The common name comes from the yellow or white eyes of the mostly pink or mauve spring flowers. These rise in clusters on mealy scapes from farina-dusted rosettes of leaves that keep their good looks throughout the growing season. The neatest trick, though, comes after autumn frosts have withered the old leaves. At the center of each rosette there appears a small, silvery or gold nest of incipient leaves around a cluster of tiny, egg-like flower buds — a source of great cheer in early winter and at snowmelt, when the garden is at its bleakest.

Birdseye primulas are at their best crowded together in soil that never stays dry for long, in a location that offers some protection from the full force of the midday sun. *Primula frondosa* and the very similar *P. darialica*, from Europe, are the biggest and the showiest of the species I've grown, but even they look best planted no more than five inches apart in groups of at least five. If you're willing to wait a few years for the best effect, the wonderful little Japanese species, *P. modesta* and *P. yuparensis*, with relatively large flowers held close to the rosette on short scapes, can be spaced as widely, but I prefer to give them no more than four inches.

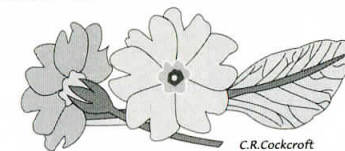
Special problems arise with *P. laurentiana*, a pretty and easygoing Gaspé native with small clusters of yellow-eyed pink flowers held giraffe-

wise at the end of disproportionately long scapes. The one- to two-inch leaf rosettes make anything less than a very dense grouping look sparse and lonely, and for this year I've jammed about twenty seedlings two inches apart in a trough.

On the downside, I've found that *P. farinosa* wastes no time in dying off in my garden. *Primula mistassinica*, named after a lake not that far upstream from Ottawa, should be even more amiable than its Gaspé cousin. But all it's done for me is produce a few half-inch flowers on a weak plant that soon after fades away.

The birdseye group is probably the easiest among the primulas to start from seed. They require no cold treatment in my experience, and the only caveat is that it's better to sow the seed thinly and take special care not to disturb the roots unduly when pricking out the seedlings. They almost always bloom the second year from seed, and most are at their peak the year after that.

At the top of my wish-list among untried birdseye primulas is *P. alcalina*, a long-scaped native of northeast Utah that appears to be a western version of *P. laurentiana*; the relatively large-flowered *P. specuicola*, another western native; and the very rare Asian *P. clutterbuckii*, the most euphonious of primulas. ❀



*Primula frondosa*



# Faith Eternal

By Jay Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

Well, maybe not eternal, but one should keep the faith in sown seed for at least three years. One of the rules of alpine gardening is to never dump out a seed pot for at least three years after sowing. Most primula can hardly be considered alpine, but the seed of many of them react much like alpine.

There is much speculation about what ingredients are necessary to stimulate germination of seed, especially from plants found above tree line. Many growers agree that moisture and cool or cold temperatures are elements needed to initiate germination of a large proportion of these seeds. Most of the seed we plant receives our standard treatment, i.e., planted early in the year and put outside to all the elements, except rain, for the first year. In subsequent years, they also receive the rain! We use a window screen covering to keep the full force of rain from hitting them. We try to keep the pots moist during our hot, dry summers, but that is not always the case.

We use a peat-based seedling mix, so we are growing a pretty good crop of moss in most pots that have been held for an extended period. It's not much of

a problem the first year, but in the years that follow, the moss can take over. In recent years, we have applied a thin layer of sand over the seed after sowing in an attempt to suppress the moss. We have also used a thin layer of fine grit on the surface of some pots and sown the seed onto the grit. The plants from late germinating seed need to be rescued from competition with the moss.

The other day I inspected some of our three-year-old seed pots and found some primrose seedlings that had failed to germinate earlier. One pot contained one seedling from open pollinated *Primula x juliana* 'Gracie' seed. One seedling isn't much to shout about, but, if it is anything like its mother, then it's definitely worth saving. Two other pots had a few seedlings from open pollinated seed of *P. x juliana* 'Dorothy', which may not be that exciting, but why not grow them on and see what they become? There also was a seedling of *P. amoena* (now considered to be *P. elatior* subsp. *meyeri*) from wild collected seed. I really am interested in seeing the flower color of this species from the wild. It might make a good source of material for hybridizing.

Now all I have to do is keep the faith for a year or two more to see them bloom. ❀



Have a seed of an idea for a **Primroses** article germinating? Remember, the editorial deadline for the Fall issue of **Primroses** is August 15.

# Plant Portrait

By Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

## PRIMULA SINENSIS

At this year's National Show, the award for Best Seedling was given to a striking seedling of *Primula sinensis*. Not often seen at shows or in the trade, the appearance of this plant should urge more people to grow it.

Nina Sinnott of Stanwood, Washington, grew the award winner from seed donated to the 1995 APS Seed Exchange by Professor J. S. Guo of the People's Republic of China. The broad, lobed and toothed leaves were bronze-colored washed with pink. Flowers were a bright pink mauve above broad, inflated calyces that are concave at the base. These unique calyces identify the species, giving the appearance of a flat-bottomed tea cup displaying the flowers within.

This "Chinese Star Primula" grows in western to north-central China at elevations from 3600 to 6900 feet on sunny limestone ledges, where it flowers from December to February. In 1902, A. Henry wrote, "The habitat and mode of growth is remarkably different from what we find in cultivated forms. The



Photos by Claire Cockcroft

Inflated calyces of *Primula sinensis* offer an easy method of identification.

wild plant grows on the rock ledges of rocky cliffs of limestone, in spots where there is not soil, and practically no moisture, exposed to the sun, and living amidst the decaying remains of former generations of the plants. The ledges of *Primula* are often continuous for hundreds of feet, and in December and January, when the flowers appear, present a scene of great beauty."

The first *P. sinensis* arrived in England in 1820. This single plant came from a garden in Canton, China. Presumably, the Chinese had been growing *P. sinensis* in cultivation for centuries. Even at that time, the cultivated plant was distinctly different from its wild ancestor and, in fact, would no longer cross with the wild type.

Nina Sinnott's prize-winning *Primula sinensis* seedling.



### Plant Portrait continued

Within only a few years, the offspring of the first English plant exhibited a natural tendency toward variation. Wild plants have large, yellow-eyed, purplish pink flowers with narrow, single notched petals. Modern cultivars have larger, fuller petals that are often frilled and give the flower a solid, round appearance. Even the cultivar leaves are larger, broader and present a fuller appearance to the plant. Today, *P. sinensis* can be found in a wide color range, from white, yellow and orange through the pink, red and purple shades. Named cultivars include 'Pink Beauty', the orange-scarlet 'Dazzler', orange 'Cardinal', and 'Royal Blue' with fringed petals. These are all single flowered, but some doubles and semi-doubles do occur. The flowers may be picoteed, eyeless, toothed, frilled or star-shaped. Even the growth habit is varied, with dwarf and giant forms, deeply cut foliage and crested foliage.

Seed planted in the spring should give good growth by fall, providing the seedlings have been adequately watered and fertilized. Since these are not hardy plants, they should be kept in a cool greenhouse at temperatures of 50 to 55°F, where they begin to flower in midwinter. Because it is not particular

about the amount of light it receives, *P. sinensis* makes a good houseplant, as long as it is kept adequately moist and relatively cool. Under such conditions, it will remain in bloom for a long time. Plants should be fertilized with an all-purpose formulation from the time the buds begin to show color until the growth slows in midsummer.

Potting soil should be water-retentive and rather loamy. The plant needs to be set deep enough to anchor its weak neck, but not so deep that the crown rots. Any tendency to topple can be alleviated by staking.

A word of caution to those with sensitive skin: Richards claims *P. sinensis* is even more allergenic than *P. obconica*!

After seeing *P. sinensis* on the show bench, I deeply regret not ordering seed when it was available. Perhaps Mrs. Sinnott will save seed and donate it to the Exchange next year. Please!

### SOURCES:

Clapham, Sidney (1972). **Primulas**. A.S. Barnes & Co., New York.

Halda, Josef (1992). **The Genus Primula in Cultivation and the Wild**. Tethys Books, Denver, CO.

Richards, A. J. (1993). **Primula**. Batsford, Ltd., London. ❀

## Finding Non-hardy Primroses

By Claire Cockcroft, Redmond, Washington

*Primula malacoides*, *P. obconica*, and *P. sinensis* have all enjoyed great popularity in the past, but are seen less frequently these days. In fact, *P. sinensis* is downright hard to find. Here is a survey of today's flower market, including what's new in non-hardy primulas and where you can find them.

### PRIMULA MALACOIDES

Dæhnfeldt Inc. has done some of the latest work on *P. malacoides* hybrids. Their 'Prima' F1 series has large dense flower heads, a compact and uniform plant habit, and comes in bright colors and a recently introduced Pastel Mixture.

### PRIMULA OBCONICA

To help primula growers avoid possible skin irritations caused by the primin in *P. obconica*, Goldsmith Seeds, Inc., has developed their 'Libre' mix, a primin-free hybrid that is early to bloom and has a good basal branching habit. It is available in five colors and a mixture.

S & G, a Dutch seed company, offers a 'Juno Series' hybrid, an early and compact grower (but not primin-free).

### PRIMULA SINENSIS

Only one variety of *P. sinensis* was offered in seed catalogues, 'Fanfare Hybrids' developed by Dæhnfeldt Inc., and unfortunately, most catalogs have discontinued the offering. I could find no source, other than the APS Seed Exchange.

### SEED SOURCES:

**Ball Seed Co.** (Wholesale only)  
622 Town Road  
West Chicago, Ill 60185-2698  
Tel: (800) 879-2255

*Primula malacoides* 'Prima Hybrids'; *P. obconica* 'Juno Hybrids, 'Libre' mix.

**Vaughans Seed Co.** (Wholesale only)  
5300 Katrine Ave  
Downers Grove, Ill 60515  
Tel: (630) 969-6300

*Primula malacoides* mix and individual colors of red, white, carmine rose, light rose, and lilac; *P. obconica* 'Juno', 'Libre', and 'Prino'.

### Carter Seeds

475 Mar Vista Drive  
Vista, CA 92038  
Tel: (800) 872-7711

*Primula obconica* 'Juno' mix; will do seed searches.

### Stokes Seeds

Box 548  
Buffalo, NY 14240-0548  
Tel: (716) 695-6980

*Primula malacoides* formula mixture; *P. obconica* 'Libre' mix.

### Thompson & Morgan

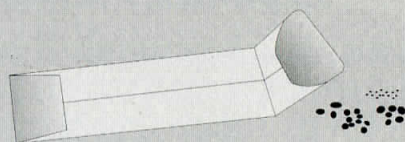
PO Box 1308  
Jackson, NJ 08527-0308  
Tel: (800) 274-7333

*Primula malacoides* 'Bright Eyes Mixed'; *P. obconica* 'Blue Agate, 'Juno Series' hybrids. ❀

### American Primrose Society Seed Exchange

Pat Wilson of Juneau, Alaska, is the new Seed Exchange Coordinator. Gather and save seeds, clean them and pack them, then send them off by October 31 to:

Pat Wilson  
A.P.S. Seed Exchange Coordinator  
9621 Kelly Ct.  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
USA





# Obconica — The Little Primula That Could!

by Larry A. Bailey, Sacramento, California

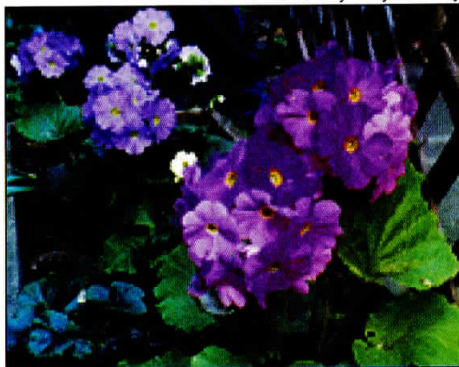
Mark Twain, who resented the Sacramento Valley's heat in the summer, once told a tale about a man who was raised in Sacramento, lived a hard life and when he died, was sent to hell. It wasn't long before he requested a sweater!

Last summer was no exception — truth be known, it was the hottest summer ever recorded. Temperatures climbed to 112°F and kept going! If a person forgot to water the outdoors potted plants twice a day, they were soon part of the 'golden landscape'. The summer's extremely dry, hot climate contrasts sharply with the very damp, cold temperatures of the bleak, foggy winter months. Temperatures can drop to mid 20°F. This past winter it rained, and rained, and rained. In the foothills just east of Sacramento record rainfalls of 50 inches in a week's time produced massive flooding in California's valleys.

Now here is where this story takes on a tale about a little, wooden container full of *Primula obconica*.

I moved back to Sacramento two years ago (I was raised in the Sacramento Valley but spent the past 27 years enjoying the cool temperate climate of western Washington state) to open a bookstore and take care of some neglected rental property. After moving back in March, while cleaning up the back yard of one of the four-plexes, I noticed a small wooden container that had both *P. obconica* and the common *P. vulgaris* hybrids. They were in full

Photo by Larry A. Bailey



*Primula obconica* is tougher than it looks, surviving with little care in hot, dry Sacramento.

bloom with healthy, bright, deep green leaves. When I asked a tenant (who had lived in the units the longest) who planted the primroses that year, the response I got shocked me: "Oh those", pointing to the little box, "they have been there ever since I have lived here — what did you call them?"

"How often do you have to water them to keep them growing so well?" I asked.

"Whenever someone remembers to", she responded, "many times they dry out completely."

That summer, from time to time, I checked in on the little box of primroses. Sure enough, they only got water occasionally by one of the tenants, and many times I found the container dry. But the next spring, they were back in full bloom.

Continued on page 19

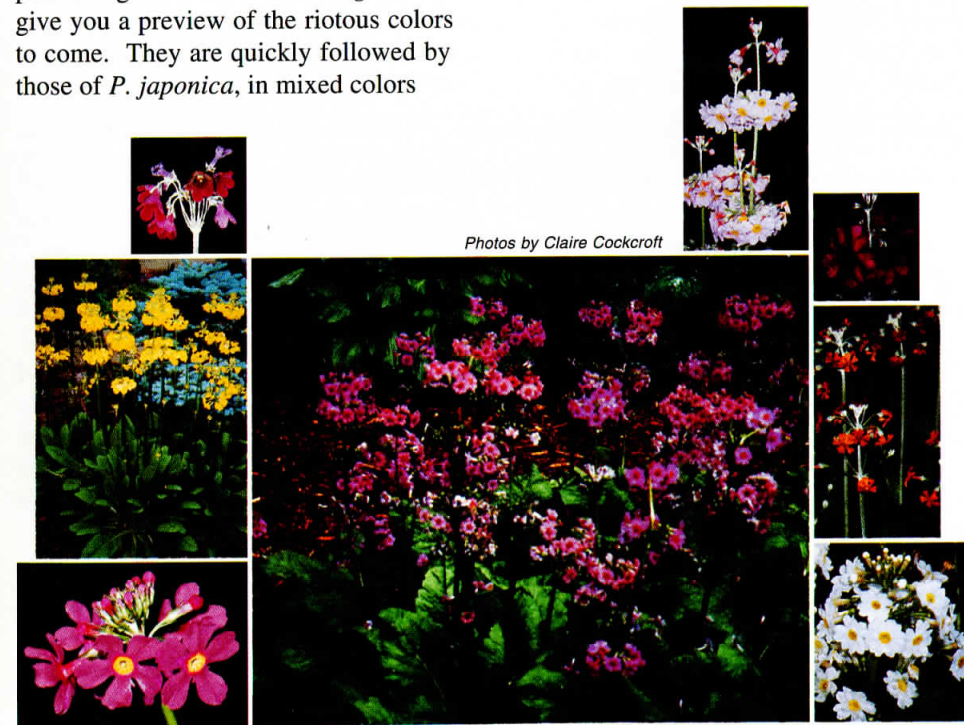
# The Glory Days of Summer

By Claire Cockcroft, Redmond, Washington

In the midst of spring primrose shows, when double acaulis hybrids bury themselves in blossoms and each auricula flower that opens is more exotic than the previous one, I can understand why many think of primroses as just a spring flower. But there's another primrose season that is overlooked at your peril — the glory days of summer, of gaudy candelabras and magnificently colored bells.

The candelabra season starts in late spring in my garden with *Primula chungensis*. Perched on a shorter flower stalk than some of the later giants, the pale orange flowers of *P. chungensis* give you a preview of the riotous colors to come. They are quickly followed by those of *P. japonica*, in mixed colors

ranging from the dark scarlet of 'Miller's Crimson' to the white (with a yellow eye) of 'Postford's White'. The foliage of *P. japonica* resembles leaf lettuce, and the leaves may droop pitifully in beds exposed to the hot afternoon sun. These poorly situated plants may also collapse from crown rot if they are crowded and the weather is especially wet and warm. Prompt and frequent division seems to minimize losses in such settings. *Primula japonica* performs much more splendidly in the cool shade, where its flowers last and last. The only drawback I have encountered



Photos by Claire Cockcroft

Clockwise from the top: *Primula pulverulenta* 'Bartley's Strain', *P. pulverulenta*, *P. cockburniana*, *P. japonica* 'Postford's White', *P. japonica* 'Miller's Crimson', *P. x bullesiana*, *P. helodoxa*, *P. secundiflora*.



with *P. japonica* is how easily it self-sows throughout my garden, even when I think I've deadheaded early and thoroughly!

More tolerant of the sun (or at least not as susceptible to rot and wilting) is *P. pulverulenta*, whose 36" flower stalks are coated with a silvery white powder. 'Bartley Strain' has soft pink flowers with a yellow eye, while the species has dark crimson flowers with an even darker eye.

Lacking in stature but compensating with blazing color is *P. cockburniana*, with its brilliant orange whorls of flowers held on white, farina-coated stems. Planted next to a purple-leafed blue corydalis, it looks especially gaudy. I started with two pots of plants that I divided in the fall into two dozen crowns. Over winter these crowns disappeared without a trace, and I was convinced that I'd killed them all. Needless to say, I was delighted (and relieved) when every crown grew and bloomed, some sporting a half dozen flower stalks.

Starting its bloom at the same time as *P. japonica*, *P. pulverulenta*, and *P. cockburniana*, but outlasting them all, is *P. helodoxa* (also called *P. prolifera*). It is the tallest candelabra in my garden, with flower stalks eventually standing over 50" tall, and displays tier after tier of golden yellow, slightly fragrant flowers. From April to late July a patch of *P. helodoxa* lights up the entry of my house, first contrasting with white rhododendrons, then dark pink azaleas, and finally dark purple clematis. The only puzzle I've had with *P. helodoxa* was when to divide it, since its foliage remains evergreen. I tried division in early spring and lost no plants, so I now stick to that regimen.

Rainbows of color are provided by the mid-season blooms of *P. x bullesiana* candelabra hybrids. Colors in my garden include salmon pink, apricot, purple, gold, orange, and rose, all with a dark gold eye. *Primula bulleyana* joins its hybrids, with deep crimson flower buds opening to a deep orange. All of these candelabra are planted in fairly dry shade in my backyard, but perform well despite their less than lush location.

Last but not least of the candelabras is *P. anisodora*, which blooms in efarinose tiers like the candelabras but has small maroon or dark red bells with a startling yellow ring around the eye. I'll admit that I didn't fully appreciate *P. anisodora* when I first started growing it — after all, its slender flower stalks were short and not too showy next to heftier, brassier candelabras. But its value grew as its bloom season stretched through the summer and all the way to first frost!

Primrose bells toll all summer long, with *P. secundiflora* leading the concert. A little touchier than the candelabras or maybe just not as robust, *P. secundiflora* nevertheless lives up to its name, often providing a second flush of deep crimson bells on silver stalks in late summer.

More bells appear as *P. alpicola* finally emerges to send up graceful stalks of powdery bells. Like *P. cockburniana*, *P. alpicola* disappears without a trace in winter, but is much slower to sprout in the spring. Three color forms are available, and the only demerits that *P. alpicola* earns is that the slugs and earwigs love to snack on its flowers!

Other latecomers are *P. florindae* and *P. sikkimensis*. The yellow or orange bells of *P. florindae* are heavily coated with farina and grow on two to three foot stems. Even plants in heavy

shade bloom reliably, and *P. florindae* fills my backyard with a heavenly fragrance. Like *P. japonica*, *P. florindae* is a prodigious seeder.

While not quite a bell, *P. vialii* definitely sounds a loud gong, with its red, poker-shaped buds riding atop tiny, overlapping blue-violet stars. *Primula vialii* grows in shade in what was described as "mounding soil" that I bought for a raised bed. The soil is in fact a very moist clay, to which I've added a lot of compost. After accidentally digging up several dormant *P. vialii* crowns last winter, I divided them, a task I had been avoiding. The plants came up a little later than usual in spring but are now blooming exuberantly.

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## Obconica - The Little Primula That Could!

*continued from page 16*

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This past summer was the test of all tests for any plants in containers in Sacramento, especially the little box of primroses. The tenant who had occasionally watered them had moved. The little container sat there all summer without hardly any water and many times I found the container bone dry — no one was taking care of them. I didn't water as I had thought that the plants had surely died from the dryness, heat, and neglect. Although the container is partly shaded for much of the day and the container is lined with black plastic, the leaves had dried to a crisp as if baked in an oven.

Finally I come to the last of the summer bloomers in my garden, *P. capitata*, profiled in the Spring 1997 issue of *Primroses*. Labeled 'Bhutan form', my plants have a dense white farina along the stems and flower heads. *Primula capitata* has the annoying habit of sloughing off its roots in late summer before it sends out its fall-growing roots in earnest. Because of this, it is easy to lose a plant or two in the fall, unless I remember to tamp the plants down firmly into the mulch.

I hope that this "cook's tour" of my summer garden will inspire you to explore the primrose family beyond those marvelous spring bloomers. The choices are many and diverse. And gosh, did I mention *Primula flaccida*? *P. waltonii*? and ...? ❀

A couple of weeks ago, around the first of March, one of the new tenants stopped by the store and asked who planted the "flowers" in the little wooden container in back of the units?

The little wooden container with *P. obconica* was in bloom again! There was no sign of the primrose hybrids, but *P. obconica* was showing the world that gardeners had indeed ignored a drought tolerant primrose.

So this little tale of the little wooden box of primroses comes to an end. I don't know what happened to the *P. vulgaris*, but I would expect that wherever they are, they are having to send home for a sweater! ❀



# Around the Shows, 1997

By Maedythe Martin, Victoria, British Columbia

The Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Show (VIRAGS), held April 4 and 5, was early in a cold season. But some primula treasures appeared nonetheless. It seemed to be the right year for Julianas (*Primula x pruhoniciana*). A huge pot of the Pacific Northwest cultivar 'Jay-Jay' was a magnificent display. The plant, lifted from the garden by its owner, Atholl Sutherland-Brown, had grown into a large patch from just a small piece given by another VIRAGS member. This wonderful display quite rightly got a first prize in its class.

Julianas included 'Dorothy', 'Schneekissen', the reliable, floriferous 'Wanda', 'Lady Greer' and Herb Dickson's white 'Little Stray'. Along with its many hybrids, the wild species, *P. juliae*, was displayed. Information cards told how the wild species, collected in the Caucasus in April, 1900, by Madame Julia Ludovikovna Mlokossjewicz, led to the myriad hybrids in the 1940s and 1950s, some of which are still with us.

The best polyanthus was a large plant of a glowing red Cowichan hybrid, grown by Atholl Sutherland-Brown in the section of his garden that seems to suit primulas very well. A delicate plant of *Primula rotundifolia*, rarely seen at shows, took the trophy for best primula. This treasure is found in the wild in the central Himalayas, in the wettest area, and

near Mount Everest. The owner, Riba Wingert, grew the primula from seed. The leaves are fascinating, much rounder than most primula leaves.

The American Primrose Society National Show, held in Tacoma at the Lakewood Mall, provided some real treats for the primula fancier. The pride of place was Dan Pederson's auricula theater. Three shelves high and framed as though it were a picture, the theater recalled the 19th century stage for the display of treasured show auriculas.

A wider range of plants was exhibited at the National Show as the season had moved on a few weeks, and now the Vernales in their various forms could be seen in bloom.

The small but elegant *P. sinensis* grown by Nina Sinnott held bright magenta-pink flowers above coppery, fuzzy leaves — a delightful plant, not often seen. Nina had grown this one from seed.

Continued on page 22

Photo by Claire Cockcroft



Rosetta Jones' newest double auricula hybrid, 'Amber', Best Plant in Show at the APS National Show in Tacoma.

## 1997 National Primrose Trophy Winners

Award	Exhibitor	Category
Ivanel Agee Trophy <i>A soft yellow Juliana hybrid, 'Dorothy'</i>	Rosetta Jones	Best Hybrid Julie
Frank Michaud Trophy	Rosetta Jones	Best Named Show Auricula
Ellen Page Hayden Trophy <i>An amber colored, fully double, one stalk auricula true to its name, 'Amber'</i>	Rosetta Jones	Best Double Auricula
Mary Zack Trophy <i>True yellow auricula named 'Gleam'</i>	April Boettger	Best Show Self Auricula
Wesley Bottoms Trophy <i>Full white flowered plant, with back 'petals' well separated</i>	Cy Happy	Best Hose-in-Hose
Captain Hawkes Trophy	John Kerridge	Best Gold Lace Polyanthus

## 1997 Tacoma Chapter Winners

Award	Exhibitor	Category
Ernest Winter Trophy <i>Red acaulis, a full rounded plant</i>	Rosetta Jones	Best Acaulis
Washington Hardware Trophy	Thea Oakley	Best Polyanthus
Floyd Keller Trophy <i>Red Juliana 'Jay-Jay' cross</i>	Rosetta Jones	Best Jack-in-the-Green
Rosa Peterson Trophy	April Boettger	Best Show Self Auricula

## Other Bests

Award	Exhibitor
Best Acaulis <i>His creamy yellow named 'Emily'</i>	Cy Happy
Best Double Acaulis <i>'Blue Sapphire'</i>	John Kerridge
Best Brightest Garden Auricula <i>Bright, deep yellow with a white eye</i>	April Boettger
Best European Species <i>Small yellow Primula vulgaris</i>	April Boettger
Best Asian Species <i>Red Primula denticulata</i>	Thea Oakley
Best Non-Hardy Species <i>Primula malacoides</i>	Thea Oakley
Best Seedling <i>Unusual bronze foliage with cerise flowers on Primula sinensis</i>	Nina Sinnott
Best Novice <i>Juliana 'Dorothy' and a fuschia colored Jack-in-the-Green Juliana</i>	Claire Cockcroft



### Around the Shows, 1997 continued

The semi-double white *P. x pubescens* grown by Cy Happy was an unusual sight. A yellow self show 'Gleam' exhibited the fine lines of a good show auricula. Rosetta Jone's admirable — well, really, envy-producing — double auriculas could be seen in her newest hybrid 'Amber', a fully double camellia-like flower of golden yellow. The heavy head of more than eight flowers was well supported on a sturdy stem. This auricula got the Best Plant In Show award.

Claire Cockcroft displayed other skills than editing with her exhibits of the Juliana hybrids 'Dorothy' and a Jack-in-the-Green, winning Best Novice award.

The Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia (AGCBC) show in Vancouver held April 26 was at the peak of the primrose season and the benches of primulas were crowded with a truly colorful display. A wide array of *P. x pubescens* hybrids were staged by Thea Foster of North Vancouver. A fine pan of collected wild auriculas from the Swiss mountains, still grown by Thea some twenty years later, merited admiration. Thea has developed a number of

strains of auriculas and *P. x pubescens* hybrids and each was represented. It was fascinating to compare original plants with their offspring.

A number of forms of *P. veris* and its hybrids were admired. The Cowichan strains of polyanthus glowed in shades of wine-red, deep raspberry red and a lovely deep blue exhibited by Ruby Chong.

The unique color of the Garryard primroses, but in a Jack-in-the-Green form, was found in a new seedling grown by John Kerridge from seed of English grower and hybridizer, Peter Ward. A true acaulis, each double flower with its green ruff of leaves was supported by a single stem of glowing red. The leaves had the bronzy/red tinge of the Garryard.

The B.C. Primrose Group had a colorful display, with plants of many varieties of primula and auricula brought in by members. Rosetta Jones appeared with several of her wonderful double auriculas including the newest, 'Cinnabar', a glowing red/burnt sienna color with a touch of gold.

The number of primrose plants and exhibitors continues to grow in the Pacific Northwest, and you can never tell when a rarity will appear, so keep looking. ❀

## Oregon Primrose Society - Valley Hi Show, 1997

By Ann Lunn, Hillsboro, Oregon

In lieu of the traditional judged Primrose Show, Oregon Primrose Society and Valley Hi Chapter collaborated to present a primrose display and plant sale on April 19 and 20, 1997. Titled "A Primula for Every Garden", the show featured over 70 plants, planters, and flower arrangements organized according to the place each might be used in the garden.

Members of the Auricula and Aleuritica Sections featured prominently in the Rock Garden category. Together with several garden auriculas, there were examples of show auriculas, marginatas, double auriculas and species. *Primula farinosa*, *P. modesta alba* and *P. frondosa* completed the display. Many visitors commented on the fragrance of the garden auriculas.

*Primula veris*, *P. kisoana alba* and *P. sieboldii* took up much of the space in the Woodland Garden display. An eight-inch pot of purple *P. sieboldii* could have been sold many times over. 'Early Girl' and an unnamed white *P. x Juliana* added to the variety of primulas that can be grown in this garden location.

The portion of the display set aside for The Shady Border was full of *P. x Juliana* hybrids in full bloom. Visitors were able to see the wide variety of named forms and compare them to the 'Wanda Hybrids'. Several good double acaulis, including 'Miss Indigo', 'Dawn Ansell', 'Sunshine Susie' and 'Quaker's Bonnet' showed the wide range of colors that are available.

The Indoor Gardening table included three color variations of *P. obconica* "Juno Series" and some marvelous flower arrangements featuring primulas. The latter were done by Dorothy Macfarlane.

The Companion Plant section was dominated by *Lewisia cotyledon* hybrids in a variety of colors, *L. tweedyi* in both salmon and white forms, and *Dodecatheon pulchellum*.

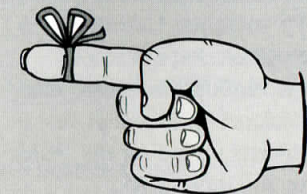
A photographic display of primulas and an information table completed the exhibit. Addaline Robinson, APS Treasurer, was kept busy answering questions from interested visitors. ❀



### NEW ADDRESS FOR A.P.S. SEED EXCHANGE!

Pat Wilson  
A.P.S. Seed Exchange Coordinator  
9621 Kelly Ct.  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
USA

DON'T FORGET:  
OCTOBER 31 IS THE  
DEADLINE TO SEND  
SEEDS TO THE A.P.S.  
SEED EXCHANGE!





# Journal Report

By Mary Frey, Kent, Washington

## ADVENTURES IN JAPAN

Paul Held, founder of the American Sakurasoh Association and APS member, writes about his adventures in Urawa, Japan, in the Winter 1997 **Rock Garden Quarterly of the North American Rock Garden Society**. *Primula sieboldii* is named *sakurasoh* by the Japanese because the bloom is similar to a cherry blossom or *sakura* and yet it is an herb or *soh*. Held discovers that this primrose is "a part of the very nature and culture of its people." During his visit to Urawa, he spots *sakurasoh* images on stairwells, buses, bricks, gates, clothes, manholes and posters. He even participates in a *sakurasoh* festival and visits the Wild Primula Preserve, which is set aside for the *sakurasoh* and other Japanese natives.

Paul Held's commitment is to introduce people to *P. sieboldii* and its many cultivars. Even though varying petal colors and shapes have led to hundreds of different *sakurasoh* varieties, Held has only registered 22 selections with the American Sakurasoh Association, with forty more in the queue. The article includes many splendid photos showing the diverse nature of this Asian beauty.

Another APS member, Carole P. Smith, writes about her expedition to Japan in the same NARGS bulletin. Her exhausting visit takes her to many nurseries and gardens including the Wild Primula Preserve in Urawa City.

## THE CHUKCHI PRIMROSE

Fording near-freezing water and keeping watch over a pair of grizzly bears, Roger Facer searched for the Chukchi Primrose, *Primula tschuktschorum*, and relates his adventures in the March 1997 **Quarterly Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society**. Facer and his companions trekked through Alaska's Denali National Park, ascending Mount Galen to 4575 feet, where they located their treasure in a boggy basin. This Nivalis species grows to four inches with one-sided umbels of three or four purple-red blooms, each with a yellow-rimmed eye. It is named after the Chukchi tribe living around the Chukchi Peninsula, at the northern end of the Bering Strait on the eastern tip of Siberia. *Primula tschuktschorum* grows on the extreme east of Siberia and in western and south-central Alaska. Growing in the Chukchi Primrose colony were plants such as *Corydalis pauciflora*, *Caltha palustris* subsp. *artica*, *Dodecatheon frigidum* and *Ranunculus nivalis*.

## A PASSION FOR PLANTS

The May 1997 issue of **Gardens Illustrated** profiles Sonia Wright's nursery, The Old Vineyard, located in Wiltshire, England. Sonia specializes in Barnhaven primulas and other wonderful plants. Sonia took an interest in plants when she was young, becoming a member of The Royal Horticultural Society at the age of 12. She started

Continued on page 27

# News from the Chapters

A summary of chapter meetings

## ALASKA CHAPTER

*Pat Wilson reports:* There is a new reporter from our group. Her name is Roxanne Bash, and I'm sure she'll do a wonderful job. [Ed. note: Pat has taken on the job of A.P.S. Seed Exchange Chairman. We thank her for all her hard work as regional reporter and wish her good luck in her new job. And welcome, Roxanne!]

Our winter up here was just terrible. We've all lost huge quantities of primroses, some people up to 90%. Things are so slow this year, and I'm trying to be patient when I go into the garden, but I know I've lost a lot. I saw Misty Hafner the other day and she had lost most of her primroses, too. I guess that's gardening!

There was an article in the paper today about what a disastrous winter it was for certain plants, including primroses. Bulbs were also hit hard. The university lost 30,000 bulb plants. The campus isn't very far from where we live, and I lost all of mine as well. Some types of plants were hard hit, but the rhododendrons, azaleas, and lilacs, in particular, are spectacular this year.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Doretta Klaber Chapter

Meets four times a year. Contact Dot Plyler, chapter president, for details.

The chapter had a small table at Longwood Gardens on May 3rd, and recruited two new members! The June meeting was a picnic, plant sale, and visit to Dick Van Duzer's garden in Pipersville, a special treat for all.

## WASHINGTON

### Washington State Chapter

Meets the second Friday of each month, except July and August, at the United Good Neighbor Center at 305 S 43rd Street, Renton, (across the street from Valley General Hospital) at 7:45 p.m. Guests are welcome. Contact Rosetta Jones, chapter president, for details.

### Eastside Chapter

Meets the first Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Kirkland Firestation #22, 6602 - 108th Ave. NE, Kirkland, Washington.

At the May meeting, Beth Tait talked about Candelabra primroses. Thea Oakley demonstrated how to prick out and transplant primula seedlings and showed slides of the A.P.S. National Show, and the chapter held a plant auction.

In June, Beth told the chapter about *Primula florindae*, then Thea demonstrated how to divide primroses and showed slides of the Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia show. The July chapter meeting will be a picnic.

### Seattle Chapter

Meets four times a year. Contact June Skidmore, chapter president, for details.

The chapter's Summer meeting will be a picnic and potluck at Fred Graff's house on Sunday, August 3, 1997.

### 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.

Congratulations are in order for a job well done by the Tacoma Chapter, staging the 1997 APS National Show. Although the number of show plants was less than in previous years — 157 plants benched from 17 growers — there was still a good representation on all tables in all sections.

Due to an untimely accident, Louise Fenili, show trophy award chairman and one of the chapter's most faithful workers, was unable to attend the show — we missed her! Best in Class awards were etched plates and cups engraved with a primrose motif.

Award certificates were presented to the winners at the Annual Meeting and Banquet, where attendees dined at tables decorated by chapter members. The Guest of Honor at the banquet was Dorothy Springer, who has been a very active member of the APS both nationally and locally for many years. The featured speaker was Cy Happy III, who gave a fine slide show and narration on "Primulas in General". The chapter was especially pleased that there were many members attending from both Alaska and Canada.

At the May chapter meeting, the members took advantage of the good weather and visited Dan Pederson's garden. Dan grows both primulas and lewisias to perfection. Highlights of Dan's garden included a magnificent *Lewisia tweedyi*, two feet in diameter and in full bloom, and *Primula reidii* growing under a fir tree in his front garden. The June chapter meeting was a slide presentation from the APS Slide Library.

## OREGON

### Oregon Primrose Society

Meets the third Friday of every month from September through May at 1 p.m. at the Milwaukie Community Club, 42nd and Jackson Sts., Milwaukie, OR. Contact Thelma Genheimer, chapter president, for details.

### Valley Hi Chapter

Meets the second Monday of the month from September through November and February through May at 1 p.m. at Thelma Genheimer's house, 7100 SW 209th, Beaverton, OR. Contact Thelma for details.

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### BC Primrose Group

Meets at the South Arm United Church at No.3 Road and Steveston Highway. Contact John Kerridge for details.

The BC Primula Group held its spring show and sale April 19 and 20 at Van Dusen Gardens, in conjunction with the Alpine Garden Society Show. Our members prepared a much admired exhibition table with many named varieties of auriculas and *Primula vulgaris*, along with other species.

In the A.G.S. Show competition almost all the entries were made by our own members, and an extra row of tables had to be set up to accommodate all the entries. A nice plant of *P. reidii* won the trophy for Best Primula. Cy Happy III was the judge for the Primula Section.

The sale took place on the walkway outside the Floral Hall, and although selling was not supposed to begin before the show opened at noon, permission was given to start earlier to accommo-

date members of the Vancouver Chrysanthemum Society, who were also holding a sale of their plants further along the walkway.

It was fortunate that we had moved from Southlands Nursery, where our sale was held on prior years, as it poured with rain on Saturday and we would have drowned. As it was, we had our biggest sale ever, and April Boettger, who brought up a truck full of plants, had only a half dozen *P.* 'Wanda' left at the close on Sunday.

We would like to thank several other members who came to support the event. They were Thea and Harold Oakley, Rosetta Jones, Cheryl and Rhein Fluck, Don and Mary Keefe, Herb Dickson, and Maedythe Martin. [Ed. note: and the Editor!] A dozen of us shared a meal and fellowship at a Richmond restaurant on the Saturday evening, and a good time was had by all. ❀

## In Memorium: Lyle Heller (1923-1997)

Lyle Heller, a member of both the Washington State and Eastside Chapters of the American Primrose Society, passed away in May. Lyle, a World War II veteran, was buried with full military honors in Mount Vernon, Washington.

Lyle and his wife, Darlene, started Wayside Nursery in Conway, Washington, where they grew primroses under the apple trees. He was a strong supporter of the APS National and Chapter Shows, always bringing plants — mostly primroses — for show and sale.

After suffering a stroke earlier this year, Lyle surprised the Eastside Chapter by being well enough to attend their May meeting. Everyone was so glad to see him, making it especially hard to say goodbye to a friend and primula grower. He will be missed by many.

— Thea Oakley ❀

## Journal Report

Continued from page 24

designing gardens in the late 1980s but found that she needed to propagate her plants to have the rare flowers required for her projects. This, of course, led to more plants than she really needed and

thus the idea of operating a nursery. The piece features many photos of Sonia's plants including *Primula vulgaris* 'Viridis', *P. x polyanthus* 'Victorian Barnhaven' and *P. auricula* 'Barnhaven'.



## Plant Societies

### 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 SM5 3ND.

### 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 Membership Secretary or join by sending the equivalent of NZ\$25 payable to NZAGS (Inc.). Visa/Mastercard facilities available.

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

## American Primrose Society Bookstore

*New for 1997!*

**Florists' Flowers and Societies**, by Dr. Ruth Duthie — \$ 9.00 US

**The Barnhaven Book**, by Angela Bradford — \$12.00 US

**Society Guides** from the National Auricula and Primula Society, Midland and West Section (Great Britain)

#1 **Show Auriculas**, by Peter Ward, revised 1997 — \$4.00 US

#3 **Alpine Auriculas**, by Derek Telford — \$2.00 US

#4 **A Classified List of Alpine Auriculas**, by Ed Pickin — \$3.25 US

#5 **Auricula History**, by David Tarver — \$3.50 US

#6 **Stripped Auriculas**, by Allan Hawkes — \$2.00 US

#7 **Border Auriculas**, by Geoff Nicole — \$3.00 US

Shipping for a full set of all society guides \$3.00 in the US, \$5.00 outside the US.

## That Ugly Ditch

By John Kerridge, Vancouver, British Columbia

### HOW TO MAKE SOMETHING FROM NOTHING

It was dug to drain away a spring that interfered with laying foundations for my home, and it was an eyesore. What to do? Why, use primroses, of course! Candelabras love the moisture and coolness. In winter they disappear under the stream but burst up each spring. A gunnera forms a small dam to keep moisture back in summer, while in winter it is dormant and shrinks down to allow more flow. The candelabras are 'Ceperley Strain' hybrids of *Primula bulleyana*, and they are self-seeding way downstream now.

This picture was taken with Ektachrome ASA 100 film in low evening light using a tripod, a one second exposure at F22. ❀

Photo by John Kerridge



**Primula**, by John Richards — \$40 US (new price)

**The Genus Primula**, by Josef Halda — \$20 US

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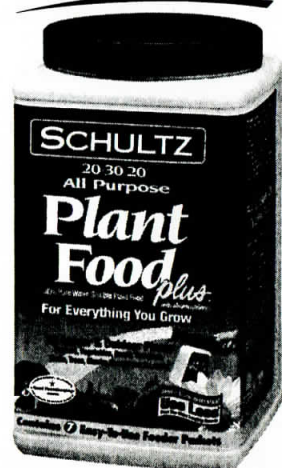
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## APS GARDEN AURICULA PHOTO CONTEST!

A generous friend of the A.P.S. would like to sponsor a full color edition of Primroses featuring Garden Auriculas, and what better way to get pictures than a photo contest! The photos must be in color, and may be slides, prints, or on PhotoCD™. Photos must depict *Primula auricula* species and/or hybrids growing in the garden (not in pots), and may feature single plants or groups of plants. \$5 will be awarded for each photo accepted for publication. First, second, and third place cash prizes will also be awarded.

### Prizes:

1st Prize \$25

2nd Prize \$20

3rd Prize \$15

\$5 for each photo accepted  
for publication

### Send your photos to:

Claire Cockcroft

A.P.S. Editor

4805-228th Avenue NE

Redmond, WA 98053-8327  
USA

Proposed publication date: Spring, 1998. All prizes will be awarded. All photos will be returned, but the A.P.S. retains reprinting rights at no additional fee.

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## BACK COVER PHOTOS

Dæhnfeldt's *Primula sinensis* 'Fanfare Hybrids' (top) and Goldsmith's *P. obconica* 'Libre' (bottom)  
— Photos courtesy of Dæhnfeldt Inc. and Goldsmith Seeds, Inc.

The manuscript for this American Primrose Society quarterly was prepared and submitted to Eagle Press in electronic form with an Intel® Pentium® P100 PC. Text files were processed and edited using Calera® WordScan™ and Microsoft® Word for Windows®; manuscript composition used Adobe® Pagemaker® and Photoshop® and CorelDRAW®.

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# Primroses

Volume 55, No. 3 Summer 1997

