



"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Journal of the
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

<http://alpinegardenersofcvi.wordpress.com/>

Issue # 28

April 2014

FROM THE EDITOR: Very late this month with no excuse except that the garden keeps calling! And everyone else's garden is calling too! If you have any items for the "Crevice" for May, please send in by end of day on May 15th to Melanson.valerie@gmail.com. Thank you.

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AGCVI UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

The Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

present

Kenton Seth of Colorado

to speak on

Hunting Wildflowers of the Wild West:

A talk about the places and plants in the recent work of
bringing the Wild West home to the garden.



Monday, May 26th, 2014, 1-3 p.m.
(doors open 12:30),

**QUALICUM BEACH CIVIC CENTRE,
747 JONES, Q.B.**

**\$5 at door includes entry in prize draw &
coffee/tea**

"Well, it's still there. The "Wild" West, that is. So much of the great basin and dry American intermountains is still there- uninhabited, dry, dusty, and lousy with wildflowers. They definitely miss that part in old John Wayne flicks. The Great Basin, lest we forget, has a secret chilly side - the mountains and alpine! These alpine environments are often encircled by vast deserts, creating ecological "islands", promoting the unique endemism and only-that-mountain-range specialty of plants. But the desert and alpine don't always get an obvious distinction from each other, especially in Wyoming where the desert and alpine ecologies actually share species and blur together, and the windy steppes becomes a Patagonia-esque cold yet dry landscape, stretching for hundreds of kilometres with a smorgasbord of unique species. This talk will offer a view into the colourful realities of hunting for native Western American plants which lead from one thing to another: from dry technical botany manuals to seed envelopes, GPS devices, topographic maps, surprise plants, new plants, and getting vehicles stuck in odd places."

Kenton J. Seth is a landscaper/gardener/wild-plant-fiend in Colorado, USA, who specializes in desert natives and builds crevice gardens professionally. He has contributed articles to the NARGS Quarterly and the AGCVI "Crevice".

Info? Valerie: 250-594-4423 or Melanson.valerie@gmail.com



Kenton writes: "Canadians are certainly aware of their heroine, Stephanie Ferguson, and her 50-ton czech-style rare-plant growing machine in Calgary. Her brave approach, in a drier climate than prior homes of Crevice Gardens, has begun to take root in a climate one stretch drier yet- in semi-arid Colorado. Most of our population lives in the lowlands and not in the famous mountains that make our state the highest in the Union (and that is no reference to the recent legalizations of one certain plant species which even made world news).

Wildly enough, Crevice gardens are on the brink of offering us drylanders a way to grow certain species of our own natives that have historically eluded us. These include the Paintbrushes and an array of moisture-sensitive grey-leaved natives like *Cryptantha* and certain trickier *Eriogonum*.

Some examples:



L: *Castilleja scabrifolia*, the Rimrock Paintbrush, in a sandstone-crevice-pot,

R: *Astragalus spathulatus* enjoys a baking hot sunny side with the help of very deep roots; a plant which can grow as either a mat or a tight bun in nature and the garden, depending on the environment.



L: The incredibly fragrant *Cryptantha humile nana* seems to crash in gardens if there is a heavy monsoon, but not in a crevice.

R: *Townsendia* 'Cottonballs'

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

*Mt. Arrowsmith Rhododendron Society
presents*

"From Rhodos to Rock Gardens"

with Dany Fortin and Shane Tillapaugh

Wednesday, May 14 at 7:30 pm Qualicum Beach Civic Centre

Shane Tillapaugh and Dany Fortin are well-known members of the North Island Rhododendron Society and bring to us their experience as gardeners, arborists, landscapers and especially their passion for dwarf rhododendrons and other rock garden treasures. This fascinating presentation will appeal to rhododendron specialists and rock garden enthusiasts alike.

Dany is an ISA Certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessor. His horticulture and rock garden experience ranges from Kew Gardens to Cumberland and Comox. He currently works for Comox Parks Department.

Shane is a gardener and naturalist who "loves birdies, bees, plants and

trees". After earning a BSc in Honours Biology from UVic, he gained the designation of Ecological Landscape Designer and Certified Organic Land Care Professional. He is currently a horticulturalist for Courtenay Parks Department.

Both Dany and Shane admit to severe cases of PCS (Plant Collector's Syndrome) and confess this is why they are such avid rock gardeners. Dozens of tiny slow- growing plants can be inserted into the crevices in their respective rock gardens. They have been inspired by the gardens of such folks as Paul Spriggs in Victoria and Bernie Guyader of Courtenay, as well as from nature. Their hiking trips into our local mountains offer outstanding examples of nature's rock gardens.

(Thanks to NIRS Newsletter for this information.)

If you are looking to squeeze more rhododendrons into your garden, or have become bitten by the rock garden/crevice garden bug, you will enjoy this presentation.

Bring your friends. Public welcome - admission free

VIRAGS and AGCBC

If you are planning a trip to Vancouver or Victoria, or want the excuse for same, don't forget to check out the VIRAGS and AGCBC websites and see what they are offering at their monthly meetings. VIRAGS: <http://www.virags.ca/>, AGCBC: <http://www.agc-bc.ca/>
They welcome members of the AGCVI and other alpine & rock garden enthusiasts.

REPORTS ON AGCVI ACTIVITIES

REVAMP OF GREEN ROOF AT MILNER GARDENS

On March 26th and April 1st, volunteers headed by Mike Miller worked on overhauling and making improvements to the green roof at Milner. Mike will do a full report on how it all turned out later this summer. In the meantime here's a couple of photos from June Strandberg:



Left side complete, right still to do



Closeup of refurbished & lifted baskets

AGCVI MEETING AT NANOOSE PLACE & ESWYN GARDEN - March 31st

After our meeting, members had the chance to enjoy some sunshine, pull a few weeds, take a few photos, in the Eswyn Garden. Here are some snaps from Linda Derkach and Kirsten Juergensen.



L: *Iris tuberosa*, formerly known as *Hermodactylus tuberosus*
As Linda notes, we'd all like this one in our garden.



R: a lovely *Daphne* 'Lawrence Crocker'



L: Happy plants in the crevice bed, R: weederers at work

TRIP TO AGCBC MEETING & UBC BOTANICAL GARDEN - March 12th

Report by June Strandberg and Mike Miller

Photos by Kirsten Juergensen & June Strandberg

June reports: "We had a really good time in Vancouver. Rex Murfitt had wonderful photos of Waterperry Gardens and *Saxifraga*. We managed to stay for the draw and all won something, but couldn't stay to chat as we had to leave for the last ferry.

Before the meeting we went to UBC alpine gardens (free admission!). The troughs were disappointing as not so much was blooming as in November. One *Draba* and a *Crocus* that had seen better days and not much getting green yet. The rock garden was better with bulbs, sax, draba and other flowers and quite a few signs of life. We didn't manage to get in to Vandusen as we got there at 4:45 and it closed at 5pm.

At the E. H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden, UBC:



L: The trough garden makes a good lunch spot, R: Botanizing



L: The Dry Alpine House, R: Grace Rollerson Sempervivum Collection



L: some of the rock formations, R: *Saxifraga* 'Allendale Charm'



L: *Synthyris missurica* ssp *stellata*, R: *Draba lasiocarpa*



L: *Primula*, *Cyclamen* and *Helleborus*, R: *Amana edulis* syn *Tulipa edulis*



L: *Draba cusickii*, R: *Lomatium columbianum*

Notes by Mike Miller on the Waterperry Presentation:

"The first half of the presentation was on the History of Waterperry as a school for young ladies and how it under strong female leadership turned into a horticultural powerhouse. This part was not as exciting as the last part that concentrated on dozens of *Saxifraga* species and hybrids that they collected and cultivated. The gardens and buildings both their original purpose and their present purpose were discussed and things like the 200 foot perennial bed about 20 feet deep were quiet awesome. I believe there are 80 acres' involved and at one time it was all producing food and plants the sales of which supported the school. I would have loved to have had more culture information through this but the topic was the school and the beginnings of the National collection that was created for the *Saxifraga*.

Saxifraga that Mike liked from Rex Murfitt's program on the Waterperry Garden collection:

Allendale Holms - yellow
 Allendale Allenperry
 Beryl Blunt - purple
 Peach Melba - soft pink
 Vikos Gold - medium yellow
 Bohemian Karst - strong red

Greuderi strong - yellow easy
Sulphuria - soft yellow
Gemma - soft pink
Mt. Maglis - collected, pink center to rosette
Penelope - very soft pink
Amilie near - white pink
Pubesiens var. snowcap - white
Buttercup nice - yellow not available anymore died out
Callosa - collected nice rosette
Crustata - striped leaves white flower
Diapersioides - white
Gem - dark center on white
Tysoe Burgundy - rich purple (new)
Jaromir - red
Jay Bisig - pure white
Kathleen
Krivoklc - yellow
Innocent - purple dark center
Marginata Balkan - big white
Ochroleuca - pale yellow
Old Britain - mid yellow
Promethea - mixed yellow and red
Sylva
Tumbling Water
Paniculata cochleari
Appeblossum
Harry Marshall - white with wine center
Sissi - mauve/pink
Wendy - pale pink

A few more that June liked:

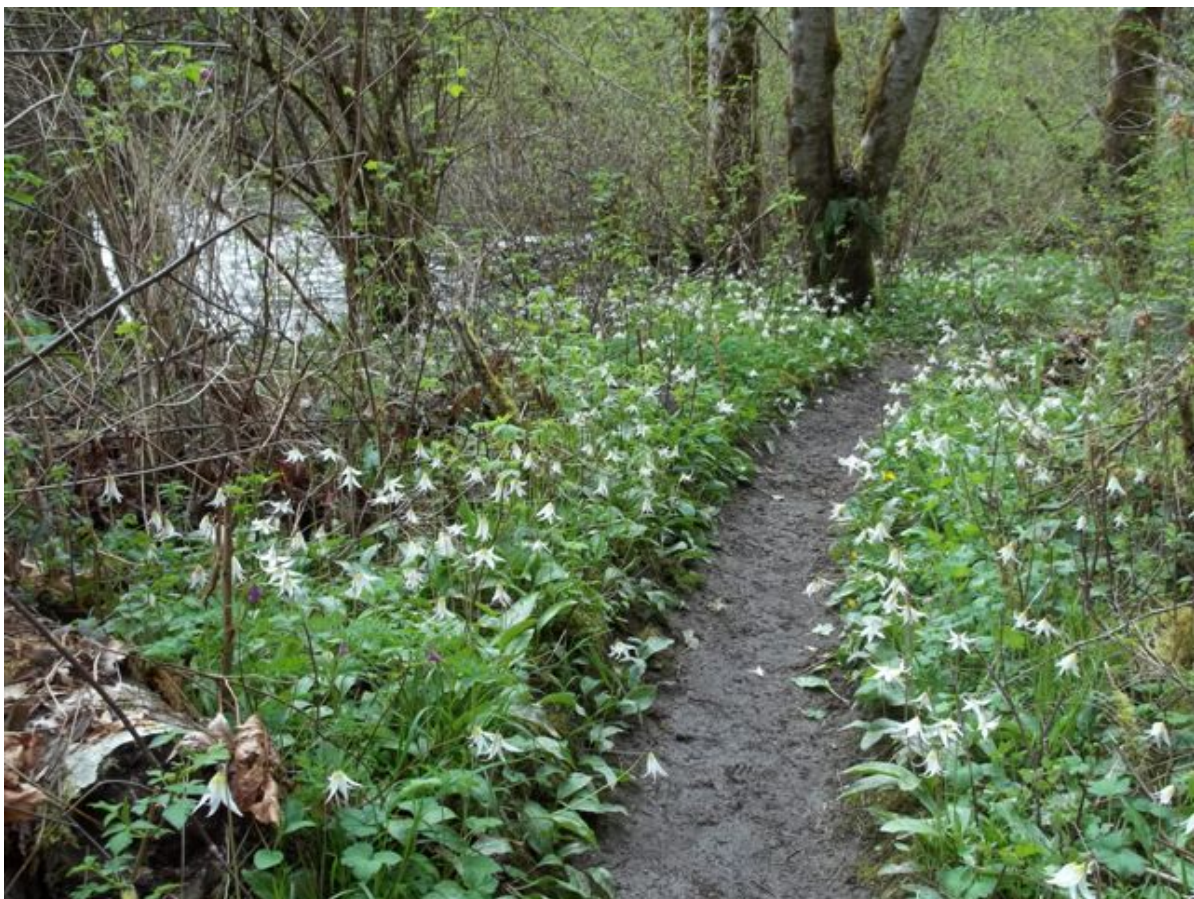
"There was Allendale Goblin right near the start - I used to have it and it was always covered with yellow flowers and everyone admired it - so it died!

There was also *S. lilacina* pale mauve not all that special but it is used in so many crosses. *S. Rex Murfitt* - purple - quite nice but all the purple ones look the same to me, except some have longer stems!

I have *S. 'Harry Marshall'* and *S. x geuderi*. *S. 'Penelope'* (pink) was one Eswyn had so it could be here! Roger Barlow used to sell such nice Allendale saxs, but he got rid of all his."

WALK ALONG MORRISON CREEK

On April 18th June Strandberg, Sue Beatty and Barb Lemoine checked out this locale. Here are some lovely photos:

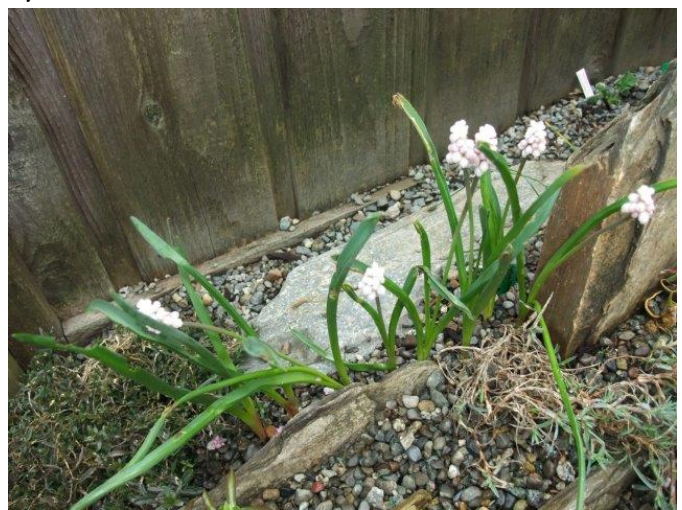


Awash in Erythronium oregonum

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - LORI PROSS



L: *Aethionema aremenum*, R: *Daphne* 'Lawrence Crocker' in bud



L: *Bellevalia ciliata* (*Hyacinthus azureus*), R: *Muscari* 'Pink Sunrise'



L: *Primula*: on the left is *P. vulgaris* 'Sue Jervis', R: *Hepatica nobilis*



Happy Sempervivums

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Margot Moser

Reflecting Margot's fascination with native wildflowers, here are some in her rock garden:



L: Wholeleaf Saxifrage, *Saxifraga integrifolia*, R: Goldenback Fern, *Pentagramma triangularis*



Henderson's Shooting Star, *Dodecatheon hendersonii*

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Valerie Melanson

I am the proud caretaker of my first *Townsendia* - *T. hookeri*, grown from NARGS 2012/13 seed # 2611, kindly supplied by June Strandberg.



L: Flower bud forming Jan 25, 2014, R: Flower starting to open April 8th - a pretty pink blush



L: open for business April 12th, R: shut down, waiting for the sun, April 13th.



L: End April: Stamens etc in interior of flower are more developed and R: stem has grown.

A GOOD SPRING FOR FRITILLARIES: More flowers than I have had before, but not all have opened fully ... yet. Not quite enough sun and heat?



L: *Fritillaria davisii*, C: *Fritillaria minuta* 'Brunette', R: *Fritillaria uva-vulpis*



L: *Fritillaria meleagris*, not quite open R: *Fritillaria meleagris*, white form

WHAT IS THIS PLANT?

Grown from seed off a plant identified as *Aethionema grandiflorum*, but it doesn't match photos on the internet or anything I have in the garden. Can you help?



Any clues gratefully received by Valerie at Melanson.valerie@gmail.com