

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Newsletter of
The Alpine & Rock Garden Special Interest Group of the
Qualicum Beach Garden Club

Issue # 16

Part 1

March 2013

FROM THE EDITOR: Thank you to all the keen, generous contributors to this issue. I hope you are seeing many signs of spring in your rock/crevice gardens. After all tomorrow is the first day of that lovely season.

CLIFF BOOKER, well-known alpine photographer, author and lecturer, shares further photos of the Wengen Area of Switzerland.



Pulsatilla vernalis in bud



Crocus vernus albiflorus

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Page 1 - Cliff Booker Photos

Page 2-3 - Upcoming Alpine SIG Events

Pages 3-10 - Report fr Amanda Carruthers

Page 11 - Other Events

Pages 1-2 -Table of Contents

Page 2 - Chris Chadwell photos

Pages 10 - Owl & Stump Grand Opening

Pages 11-12 - Eswyn Alpine & Rock Garden Report

UPCOMING ALPINE SIG EVENTS

Please Note: Everyone must have paid their QBGC dues in order to participate in our SIG activities.

MONDAY, MARCH 25TH - REGULAR SIG MEETING - 1 p.m. PROGRAMME: POTTING UP SEEDLINGS AND CUTTINGS, LOCATION: JUNE STRANDBERG'S, 1980 Island Highway, the drive with the mailbox with flower planter, between Village Way and Bennett Road in Qualicum Beach - you will have received more details in an email from June Strandberg.

We are also launching a new section to the business meeting: SHOW 'N TELL: bring along your successes, failures, cautions, tips, ideas to share. We will also be discussing the following -

SATURDAY, APRIL 13TH - ROAD TRIP TO VIRAGS SPRING SHOW & PLANT SALE -

Amanda Carruthers has invited us to visit again. It's a year and a bit since the new garden was built. Please see her article below. More information to follow with details of itinerary and carpooling.

MONDAY, APRIL 22TH - NOTE NEW DATE (1 week earlier than usual) & TIME - SIG MEETING AT NANOOSE LIBRARY HALL, 12:30 - 2:30 P.M., followed by visit and/or work party at the Eswyn Alpine & Rock Garden at Nanoose Place. More details to follow in an email from June Strandberg.

SATURDAY, MAY 4TH, 2013 - OUR PLANT SALE @ MARS SPRING FLING - details to follow

MONDAY, MAY 27th, 2013 - CHRIS CHADWELL, PLANT HUNTER, SEED COLLECTOR, AND SECRETARY OF THE HIMALAYAN PLANT ASSOCIATION, will be visiting us for garden visits and a seminar. He will speak on PLANT HUNTING FOR ALPINES IN THE BORDERLANDS OF WESTERN TIBET - Chris, with 27 expeditions under his belt, will share his fine images of recent explorations for rock garden plants in the NW Himalaya and Little Tibet.



Cremanthodium decaisnei



Chris Chadwell with *Salvia hians*

WEDNESDAY, MAY 29th, 2013 - HIMALAYAN SEED SEMINAR with Chris Chadwell at Alba Plants at Cowichan Bay - Members have already had an email about this. If you haven't booked a space, please contact Valerie at Melanson.valerie@gmail.com , to see if space is available. Cost is \$15 payable in advance. Seminar runs from 10:15 to about 1:30. Bring bag lunch. Coffee/tea provided.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2014:

MONDAY, MAY 29TH, 2014: Cliff Booker, well known alpine photographer and speaker will be in B.C. and coming to visit us.

A REPORT FROM AMANDA CARRUTHERS in VICTORIA

A lovely established Victoria garden reorganized Spring 2012.

In March 2011 our old house with the big garden on the 1700 block of Haultain Street in Victoria passed to me and my family from my mum Joyce Carruthers. Joy tempered with trepidation was the feeling, joy at being able to stay in the family home with the big yard, and trepidation about upkeeping an old house and big garden, even after some much-needed modernization was complete.

I've vivid memories of the evolution of the garden that was started in the early 1970's. I watched the potholed dirt driveway down the side of the house become a brick driveway with garden, trees and shrubs on both sides. The muddy parking circle out back was made into an urban bog and years later grassed over to make room for a big rock garden. I remember big weekend trips to collect materials, visits to houses and gardens of mum's planty friends, the smell of soil baking in the kitchen and pots of seeds and cuttings everywhere.



Entrance to Garden 2005



North East View



North West View mid 2000



Vegetable Garden mid 2000

After my dad died, mum met ZZ and a big garden transformation began with the raising of several rock outcrops, gardens in old troughs recreated and beautiful new blooms appeared from "out of nowhere". One year, ZZ's brother came to visit Canada for a holiday, the year the circular driveway went in. He was put to work helping ZZ bash an opening into the stone wall with a sledge hammer, and to take turns operating the road mulch packing machine and wheelbarrow. The rocks from the wall, the turf and soil from the new driveway were transported to the back of the yard and built into a raised vegetable bed. One day he told me with humour "I think your mum is trying to kill me". When the project was finished the three of them took off on a massive road trip to the great outdoors, toward mountain exploration, plant hunting and other adventures.



Close-up of New Rock Garden - 2005



A bigger view of new rock garden



Side view



Big Granite Pot Mid 2000



Zdenek's Pot Spring 2011

After spending most of 2011 weeding like mad and reminiscing about my mum saying "one year's seeds, seven year's weeds" and seeing all the bulbs and plants that needed dividing, pruning and the need for more general attention everywhere, I began to see a garden transformation was imminent when an amazing opportunity presented itself in the form of a visit from our esteemed Mr. Zvolanek.

I had decided on a few features I wanted in a new garden, features that would require the moving of great volumes of material, and discussed my ideas with ZZ who said he'd participate doing the rockwork. A financial hurdle presented itself immediately on receipt of an estimate from a company I had obtained a quote from. Fortunately and

incidentally, while travelling to Qualicum Beach to hear ZZ's lectures, I received good information from Paul Spriggs who recommended I call another company to enquire about hiring a mini excavator with operator. I called Don Mann Excavating, spoke with Trevor Mann and hurdle vanished; new garden project had a start date.

Modernising the garden, both to reduce summertime watering and maintenance and to accommodate more onsite parking seemed a sensible idea. The creative feature of the new garden was to be a hill with paths through a shrubby urban forest. The hill would be made using the beautiful stones we already had. The hill was built with a south east facing slope; idea being it would mitigate direct view of street and provide pleasant visual buffer between yards for neighbours on both sides of the fence. The new hill garden and slopes have walking paths to accommodate both the garden's audience and workers. Furthermore, the project would involve use of all materials on hand so as not to be sending anything unnecessarily to the dump. This project's organiser is proud to declare that the only truckload of material that left the premises was full of soil, and it didn't go to the dump!

Work commenced with digging up as many bulbs, plants and shrubs we could find and storing them for future planting. Paul Spriggs and one of his guys came by and trenched around the big Bay tree and a few other large shrubs so the excavator could scoop and transport them to their new location its bucket. Together ZZ, his helper and the equipment operator smashed the brick paths, dug and moved tonnes upon tonnes of soil from the raised bed in the backyard, dug the trench alongside the fence and built the area designated for additional onsite parking and "the southeast facing hill". The former brick path around the vegetable garden became the foundation underneath the new walking path along the fence; the rocks that supported the raised bed were stacked for later use. Truckloads of road mulch were delivered to fill in the parking area, build new paths and to mulch the entire hill and slopes against weeds. The most spectacular delivery was made by a Slinger truck that was able to send a precise stream of gravel to wherever it was wanted. We stood with shovels to watch the miracle that saved hours in wheelbarrow pushing. To our delight we discovered a layer of sandstone buried below the sandstone mosaic garden already dismantled. The buried sandstone was resurrected as a summit for the south east slope. One day Paul arrived with a donation of schist that became an east facing crevice slope. One day Graeme Ware from Owl and Stump Rare Plants came to visit ZZ and make a plant donation to the new garden.



Garden Reorganization underway February 2012



Gravel distribution via Slinger rather than Wheelbarrow

Pleasant work continues in the garden even after the lion's share of the garden is built. This spring bulbs found growing in strange places are being reunited into family clumps or better locations, and plants that aren't happy or didn't survive are being trimmed up and replanted or removed altogether. The box hedge bits saved from the old garden and replanted by ZZ so they could "have chance" have been moved to a strip of soil outside the rock wall with an idea that in time they will form a small well trimmed mini hedge adjacent to the sidewalk. The rock and alpine enthusiasts of the Qualicum Beach Garden Club were the first group of visitors to the new garden; a side trip to compliment their annual visit to the VIRAGS Alpine Show in April 2012.



First photos from April 2012



April 2012 visit of the Qualicum Beach Alpine SIG

The following photos are some of what has been blooming in the garden lately.



Daphne



Erythronium



Iris 'George'



Pulmonaria sp. TBC



Primula



Primula



Trillium in bud



Primula

OTHER EVENTS:

The Owl & Stump Rare Plants nursery is proud to announce its grand opening for 2013.

Your local alpine specialist has tabbed Sunday April 14th as our first day that we will be open to the public.

Special tours and previews of earlier times can be arranged.

Always open Sunday - Tuesday from 10AM - 4 PM til Tuesday Sept 10th.

We are just 5 minutes south of the Crow & Gate English Pub off Yellow Point Rd at 3395 McGuire Way, Ladysmith, BC.

Look for the Owl & Stump signs.

This year we have some great feature plants including *Phlox* 'Boranovice' and *Phlox* 'Boranovice 3', *P.* 'Ochsenblud' and *P.* 'Star of Heaven'.

Lewisia in several forms and species incl: *nevadensis*, *nevadensis* 'rosea', *pygmae* and *cotyledon*.

As a specialist in *Cotoneaster* we have a fair number of named species at the seedling stage as well as some great little *Pieris* including 'Little Heath' and 'Cavatine'.

A complete descriptive list will go up on the web shortly. www.owlandstumprareplants.com

We grow everything from seed so we don't usually have great numbers of any one thing so it is best to act fast.

2013 is shaping up as a terrific year in our nursery- our first full year in business.

I look forward to seeing you and answering any enquiries that you might have.

Grahame Ware, owlandstump@shaw.ca, 250 722-2148

OTHER EVENTS:

March 26th VIRAGS: Ian Efford (NZ)

April 6th AGCBC: Show and Sale, VanDusen.

April 10th AGCBC: Jan and Dave Dobak (Some Scottish Gardens)

April 23rd VIRAGS: Andy Mackinnon (Adaption to Life in the Alpine)

ESWYN'S ALPINE & ROCK GARDEN - MARCH NEWS

Report & Photos by Karen Unruh

Two dwarf cushion Saxifrage hybrids have opened their cream coloured blooms at the garden. They are appropriately situated in the Crevice section of the garden.



Saxifraga 'Millstream Cream'



Saxifraga 'Vladana'

Using Malcolm McGregor's book, *Saxifrages A Definitive Guide to the 2000 Species, Hybrids & Cultivars* to guide me, I have found out the following information about these

two plants. Both are categorized as Section *Porphyron* subsection *Porophyllum* Hybrids which McGregor says includes "some of the most charming of all cushion plants with flowers and foliage contributing to their perfect proportions". And he adds that "the petal colour is often intriguingly contrasted with the colour of the nectary ring", which is beautifully evident in the blooms of these two plants.

In describing growth conditions for these *Porophyllum* cultivars, McGregor says that "The ideal is that of the mountain homes of the parental species with cool nights, strong winds, high light levels and plentiful rain". That describes our present weather! We need to watch for any development of dead brown patches on the south side of the cushion--none visible now--which could happen with strong summer sun and insufficient moisture. We can remedy this by placing a rock on the northeast side of the plant to provide some shade during the hot days of summer.

Saxifraga 'Millstream Cream' is a *Saxifraga* x *elisabethae* hybrid cultivar, developed in 1964, with a robust weather-resistant mat of green foliage with multi-flowered stems of medium-sized yellow flowers that are good in open rockeries but poor in pots.

Saxifraga 'Valdana' is a *Saxifraga* x *megaseaeflora* hybrid cultivar, developed in 1978 from the group that has warm buff to orange-yellow flowers. McGregor states that "the flowers last better with protection", and our picture does show more petal damage from the rain.

These two plants were cuttings that June Strandberg made from plants that she had purchased from Harvey Wrightman. Malcolm McGregor also states in his book that these cultivars are more easily propagated by cuttings than from seeds.

Two additional buff coloured Saxifrage are currently blooming in the garden. They are marked as *Saxifraga* species.

They are smaller plants and we will watch them as they grow. June suggested that I add the pictures to see if anyone can further identify them. We do know that these two plants originally, or cuttings from the originals, came from Eswyn's garden in Qualicum.



Saxifrages To Be Identified