

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

Issue # 8

June 2012

From the Editor:

First off, a warm welcome to our first British member, John Husbands, webmaster of "Portraits of Alpine Plants". Don't forget to bookmark his website as a resource:

<http://portraitsofalpineplants.com/Portraits%20of%20Alpine%20Plants.htm>

John has contributed two plant portraits this issue.

I hope all is well with your gardens. The cool, rainy weather has been a challenge in some regards, but in others perhaps a boon. So many blooms ... even a first flower on my *Delosperma sutherlandii*, grown from seed this spring.

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UPCOMING ALPINE SIG EVENTS

June 23 & 24th - Saturday & Sunday - TRIP TO RHODODENDRON LAKE - Gary Murdoch, Rainforest Tours is planning two trips to Rhododendron Lake June 23 and June 24 at a cost of \$35 each, including taxes. Further info has already been sent out by Jo Graham [don-jo@shaw.ca](mailto:jo@shaw.ca) to Alpine SIG members.

June 25th - Monday - JUNE REGULAR MEETING - VISIT TO OWL & STUMP RARE PLANTS NURSERY at Yellow Point. We aim to carpool & arrive at the nursery c. 1:45. Full details to follow by email from June Strandberg.

June 26th - Tuesday - ROAD TRIP TO VIRAGS, VICTORIA - HARVEY WRIGHTMAN

speaking on **Clay/Crevise: New techniques for new plants**, Doors open at 7 p.m. Meeting begins 7:30 p.m. at Gordon Head United Church Hall, 4201 Tyndall, Victoria B.C. For carpooling and further info see email from June Strandberg on June 12th.

July 30TH - Monday - JULY REGULAR MEETING - WILDFLOWER WALK AT PARADISE MEADOWS, TBC depending on weather and blooms.

AUGUST - TRIP UP MT. COKELEY - Date & details, TBC. Dependent on snow & blooms.

SEPTEMBER 8th - WORKSHOP ON BUILDING A CREVICE GARDEN IN A TROUGH with **Gordon Mackay**. 10am start and bring a bag lunch. It is going to be at Janet Phillips place, she has a large covered area. Her address is 2632 Peterson Rd, Nanoose. You get to it by going up Kaye Rd which runs behind the weigh scales just before you get to Parksville. Full details to follow.

ALPINE SIG SPECIAL PRIZE DRAW - JULY 10TH

Our member, Bernie Guyader of Courtenay, has donated to the group an Edith Wilk print , # 27 of /400. A vase of Erythronium oregonum is shown against a dark background. It has an oak frame that is 17 1/2 in.X 14 1/2 in. The artist, Edith Wilk has been a resident of the Victoria area for most of her life.

Draw Tickets: 1 entry \$2.00 3 entries \$5.00 Tickets at our meetings or from Barbara Kulla, bkulla@shaw.ca

Monies earned will be used to support Alpine SIG activities - speakers, workshops, etc.



JUNE'S TRIP TO THE U.K.

June Strandberg has returned from her UK trip and will be sharing her impressions and photos of Alpine, Rock and Crevice Gardens with us over the next few issues. In the meantime, here are some photographic highlights:

Royal Horticultural Society Wisley



ZZ's Crevice Garden, facing south east



Wisley Alpine House



One of the Wisley Troughs



Eriogonum thymoides, native to NW USA

Royal Botanic Garden Kew



Davies Alpine House



Tufa Wall in Davies Alpine House



RBG Kew Rock Garden



RBG Kew Troughs

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

July 10th - Tuesday - QBGC REGULAR MONTHLY EVENING MEETING - GRAHAME WARE
ON "Carl Jung, Shade-Loving Plants and Garden Variety Self-Realization"

'Best of the West' Conference

Celebrating Best Gardening Practices & 30 years of Master Gardeners in BC

October 20, 2012 Please see registration form attached. Also see May "Crevice" for other details.

May 2013 - Czech International Rock Garden Conference -see www.czrgs.cz

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - LORI PROSS



Meconopsis grandis - Himalayan Blue Poppy



Lewisia bed

Sempervivums / Sedums



A Trio of Troughs. The small pot has sempervivum from June's garden.

Follow up on WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - AMANDA CARRUTHERS, from last issue - possible IDs by John Husbands.

"Amanda Carruthers has taken two nice photos - The first looks like: *Penstemon fruticosus* subsp. *scouleri* 'Albus' I have grown this lovely plant in my garden for many years. The second looks like a Phlox: possibly one of the many subulata hybrids."

BLOOMING NOW AT THE ESWYN GARDEN, NANOOSE

Report by Elaine Bohm



Plants donated by Valerie Melanson



Loraine Wilhelm & Karen Unruh at work

This past Tuesday our small group planted Valerie's plants in the crevice garden and installed the water lines. The crevice area now looks more complete and rain this weekend should ensure a good start for them.

We now plan to do a "weeding & potting up seedlings" session this coming Tuesday, June 19 about 12:30, then later in June/July we will order chipped rock to cover the entire garden.

We have a bag of sea soil to mix with the pile of soil at the site so just bring small pots/plastic bag for cuttings. We hope to get a good number of plants started for the spring plant sale.

Any interested members are invited to help out on Tuesday. Elaine & caretakers

PLANT OF THE MONTH AT THE ESWYN GARDEN



A lovely collection of Lewisia's at Eswyn's Alpine & Rock garden. Donated by June Stranberg

"Lewisias were introduced to Britain in 1826, but have never earned the popularity which their beauty deserves. Being succulent plants, they will not tolerate a wet loamy soil, but present no difficulty in a deep and rich scree-preferably planted on their sides between rocks, so that winter wet will not lodge in their rosettes. They are completely hardy, and the sole difficulty of growing them lies in their habit of rotting at the collar, which they are just as likely to do in summer when watered with a hose during dry weather, as they are in a wet autumn. Quick drainage and rich scree are the secret of growing Lewisias, and all are good garden plants with the exception of the finest of the race, *Lewisia tweedyi*, which is a difficult plant whose flower buds form in autumn and sometimes get nipped by the frost."

Excerpt from Roy Elliott's *Alpine Gardening*, 1963

I have a signed copy of his first edition which is a wonderful read & available club members to borrow. Report by Elaine Bohm

USEFUL LINKS

From John Husbands-

Take a look here at some of these great pictures taken by Don Geyer -

<http://www.mountainscenes.com>

Good article on Lewisias and their culture by Todd Boland on the Dave's Garden website:

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/993/#b>

FOR SAXIFRAGE LOVERS:

A recent Saxifrage family plant portrait from UBC Botanical Garden, this plant formerly known as *Suksdorfia ranunculifolia*, originally published by William Hooker in 1832 as *Saxifraga ranunculifolia*

<http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/potd/2012/06/hemieva-ranunculifolia.php>

RECOMMENDED SOURCES - NURSERIES, ETC.

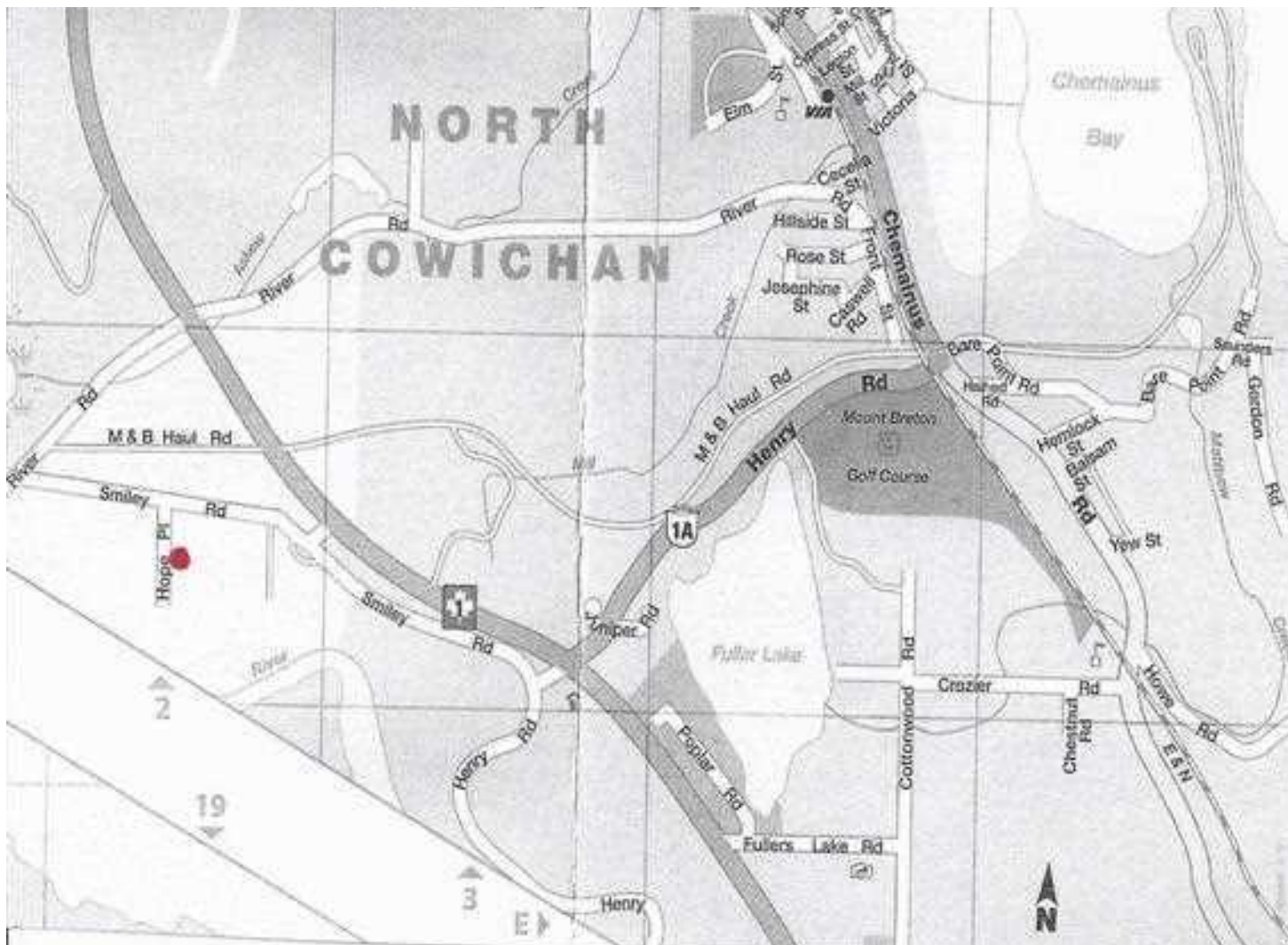
Van Isle Slate

This is a good source of inexpensive slate. June and I went down to Chemainus this spring and picked up enough to make a small crevice garden in a trough. We were advised to choose the "Chips" and to pick our own. We both loaded the back of my car and they estimated the weight very generously.

You can leave the highway at Henry Road or there is an entry as can be seen on the map below just north of that. The address is 3420 Smiley Rd., but it is really on Hope Road. There are signs once you are on Smiley heading away from the highway. Price is either 10 or 25 cents per pound.

Have fun

Mike Miller



MEMBER ADVERTISEMENTS

The Parkville Community Garden has lots of Pots, 1 Gallon and smaller, free to a good home. We will get rid of them after the 22nd of June, Cultivate will take them All.....Please contact Kirsten Juergensen at johannesandkirsten@shaw.ca

The Crevice Garden and its Plants, by Zdenek Zvolanek, stock left from seminars, available at cost - \$10.56 CDN each. Please contact Valerie at Melanson.valerie@gmail.com

PLANT PORTRAITS

Eriogonum caespitosum by John Husbands



"With over 250 species, the genus *Eriogonum*, or wild buckwheats, is tied in third place with *Penstemon* as one of the largest genus of flowering plants in North America. Only *Carex* with 480 species and *Astragalus* with around 375 species outnumber them. It was about 1990 when I first "discovered" them; in the catalogue of Rocky Mountain Rare Plants. Up until then very few people cultivated them here in the UK, and I can't recall any other nursery listing them at that time.

RMRP only offered seed, but what a wonderful mouth-watering selection they offered! I sent for seeds of *Castilleja*, *lupinus*, *Astragalus*, *Penstemon*, *Townsendia*, *Oxytropis* and many others; and of course, *Eriogonum*!

I have had success and of course losses, but I would certainly recommend attempting to grow some of these wonderful wild beauties from seed. You may have to wait over a year for the first tiny leaves to emerge from the grit of your seed pots, and perhaps wait another year - or more- until you see a flower.

Is it worth the wait! YES! YES! YES!

The picture of ***Eriogonum caespitosum*** seen here is from wild seed collected in Idaho. (RMRP) I took this photo in May 2012. It's a slow grower; the plant is now about 10 years old. The flowers age to a rusty crimson towards the end of summer. It is grown outside in one of my raised beds and covered with a sheet of glass during the winter months. "

Penstemon fruticosus subsp. Scouleri 'Albus' by John Husbands



Here is my photo of *Penstemon fruticosus subsp. scouleri 'Albus'* taken earlier this evening as the sun dipped over the horizon. White is a rare colour in penstemons. It's a native of British Columbia, Washington Idaho and Alberta. Very easy to propagate from cuttings, so once you have acquired this lovely plant there is no excuse of not having it for a lifetime!

ANNE ASHBERRY and MINIATURE GARDENS

by Valerie Melanson

On joining the Alpine SIG, I was introduced to Eswyn and June's troughs. At meetings I heard about Rex Murfitt's book on troughs (*Creating and Planting Garden Troughs*, by Joyce Fingerut and Rex Murfitt (Wayne, PA: B. B. Mackey Books, 1999), and borrowed it from the library. A goldmine of a book and his "Sources and Resources" section is very useful, even today. In his bibliography was listed a book, "*Miniature Gardens*", by Anne Ashberry. Intrigued by the title, I tried

the library system to no avail, but found a second-hand copy through Amazon.co.uk.

After studying this wonderful 1977 edition, I hunted down other works by Anne Ashberry. It turns out she started publishing books in 1951 and had a nursery at Chignal Smealey, Chelmsford, Essex, where she grew alpine plants and dwarf conifers for miniature gardens. She also experimented with bottle gardens and fern cases. Her mission was to make gardening possible for people with space or physical restrictions by using window boxes, troughs, bottles and cases. She perfected the construction of troughs from various materials. She also identified suitable dwarf/alpine plants that would work in the miniature tableaux she designed for her troughs. All of her books include photos, drawings and plant lists and are worth checking for ideas for our own troughs and miniature gardens. Some plant names may have changed but I hope that research will make it possible to track down these treasures.



Photo of Anne Ashberry displaying troughs (from internet archive)

List of Anne Ashberry Books that I own:

Miniature Trees and Shrubs, London: Nicholas Kaye Ltd., 1958

Bottle Gardens and Fern Cases, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964

Alpine Lawns (with Some Account of the Special Use of Carpeting and Crevice Plants), London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966

Gardens on a Higher Level (for Windows, Balconies and Courtyards), London: the Garden Book Club, 1969

Miniature Gardens, London: David & Charles, 1977

If you would like to borrow any of the above, please contact me at
Melanson.valerie@gmail.com