

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

Issue # 9

Part 2

JULY 2012

UPCOMING ALPINE SIG EVENTS

JULY 23rd - MONDAY - WILDFLOWER WALK AT PARADISE MEADOWS. Meeting at June Strandberg's to carpool, at 9:30 am. Return time approx. 5:00 pm. PLEASE WATCH FOR AN EMAIL FROM JUNE STRANDBERG with further details and a request to register your name to participate.

JULY 30th - MONDAY - REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING HELD AS A TRAVELLING MEETING, visiting various member gardens. WATCH FOR EMAIL DETAILS FROM JUNE.

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. 10 am 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 - LOOKING AHEAD TO 2013

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. Topic TBA

Tuesday, May 28th, 2013 - Road Trip to VIRAGS - CHRIS CHADWELL, PLANT HUNTER, speaking on "Paradise on Earth".

TBC Wednesday, May 29th, 2013 - We are invited to attend a seminar with Chris Chadwell at Alba Plants Nursery, Cowichan Bay, on "Starting Himalayan Seeds". **DATE AND TOPIC TBC. Reservations will be a must.

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

May 2nd to 5th, 2013 - Czech International Rock Garden Conference. The conference website is operational now: <http://www.czrgs.cz/conference.html> with registration form, pricing, preliminary programme, etc. Please have a look.

NEW CREVICE GARDEN IN BOHEMIA

by Zdenek Zvolanek

I have sent you photos of a quite new rock garden, which has been built 20 km south of Prague. Mr. Tomáš Kroček, car mechanic and amateur photographer, made some hillsides near his house and used red marble/limestone to form a crevice garden. The plastic ponds are hidden under flat slabs. There are plenty of unplanted crevices and plenty of possibilities for the future. Important is the visible passion of the owner for this kind of landscaping.





ZdZ Zdenek has also sent along this lovely view of his his garden at the Beauty Slope, showing Da *Daphne cneorum* 'Velký Kosíř'. It is a robust Pl plant selected in nature in Moravia, but with Intintensive colour - the mass of pink on the Lo lower right.

ZZ ZZ is now setting off on a botanical trip with Mo Mojmir Pavelka. They will go into the Alpi Apu Apuane to collect *Moltkia suffruticosa* and Clo *Globularia incanescens* in the marble Pr producing region around the Carrara quarries.

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - SUE BEATTY



Scabiosa caucasica - pincushion plant.



White Campanula

Sue writes: "I've always loved this kind of plant (*Scabiosa caucasica*)- it's a cushion but the flowers look so soft and fluffy. I'm guessing they must be with Mrs. Bug hanging out there :-) I try to grow a lot of plants to attract beneficials and this one is liked by bees, some butterflies and apparently lady bugs. Another one (*Campanula*) I bought at the alpine plant sale. It's like Christmas every time a bud opens since I had no clue what most of them looked like."



Allium cernum



Cerinthe

Sue writes "our native nodding onion (*Allium cernum*). Mine's just starting to open up and I do plan on taking another shot (if it stops raining) when they're open. I love though that it adds some interest and texture even before it blooms." *Cerinthe* - "This is such a striking plant and I got the seeds from one of the alpine group meetings. I've two different kinds both equally as stunning."

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - JUNE STRANDBERG



Campanula choruhensis



Centaurea odyssey



Hebe 'Nicola's Blush'

BLOOMING NOW AT THE ESWYN GARDEN, NANOOSE



Androsace lanuginosa



Erigeron mucronatus syn. *E. karvinskianus*



June Strandberg, busy weeding



Primula capitata ssp. *mooreana*

PLANT OF THE MONTH AT THE ESWYN GARDEN

Delosperma

by Loraine Wilhelm

The name of the genus is derived from the Greek words *delos*, visible, and *sperma*, seed, alluding to the capsules which have no covering membranes, thus exposing the seed once the capsules are open.

Delosperma plants are perennials and can be upright, procumbent, prostrate or even cliff-dwelling. They vary from woody to herbaceous and some even have thick, succulent root systems, while others root at the nodes. Leaves are sessile and vary from flat to cylindrical, the surfaces often grooved and covered with bladder cells or with bladder cells modified to form hairs.

Flowers are borne singly or in clusters and colours vary from white, cream, yellow, orange to various shades of pink and even crimson. Flower size varies greatly and some flowers can reach a diameter of 40 mm (*D. sutherlandii*). Glands are separate. Flowering times are from August to January, depending on rainfall. The plants often flower sporadically throughout the season if rainfall persists. Flowers open at midday and close again in the late afternoon, but on overcast days they tend to remain closed.

Most Delosperma species are self-compatible where as many other mesemb genera are not, thus only one Delosperma plant can still ensure seed production. Capsules ripen, dry and open to release seed by wetting, a process known as hydrochasty. This is a unique mesemb character and is one of the secrets of the success of the family in southern Africa (Parolin 2001). Though lacking covering membranes, capsules of Delosperma have prominent valve wings and diverging, expanding keels but no closing body. Seeds are normally shorter than 1 mm and germinate readily. Delosperma plants may live up to 20 years if treated appropriately.

Excerpts above from plantzafrica.com.



Delosperma sutherlandii in crevice garden
Photo by Loraine Wilhelm



Delosperma cooperi from Eswyn's Garden
Photo by Elaine Bohm

NB: the flowers start and end earlier here in Canada, the above mentioned August to January is African bloom time. Also they need good drainage here to make it through our wet winter. In addition to the initial *Delosperma cooperi* that came from Eswyn's garden, Valerie Melanson has donated another *Delosperma cooperi*, a *Delosperma basuticum*, a *Delosperma 'Graaf Reinet'* and a *Delosperma sutherlandii* to give the garden a wonderful collection. They are located in the new crevice area created by Paul Spriggs last fall.

Report by Loraine Wilhelm

Note from Valerie: all grown from seed started in January 2012. *C. basuticum*, *D. cooperi* and *D. sutherlandii* from the AGS seed exchange. *D. 'Graaf Reinet'* from Alplains. So far the *D. cooperi* and *D. sutherlandii* (first bud started to open mid June) are blooming this year, fingers crossed for the other two.

USEFUL LINKS

Two recent "Plant of The Day" postings by the UBC Botanical Garden were of alpinists:

<http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/potd/2012/06/penstemon-azureus.php>

<http://www.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/potd/2012/06/lewisia-cotyledon.php>

ADVERTISEMENTS

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

BRANDY MICELI, Certified Horticultural Technician, former student of Gordon Mackay, and present part-time employee at Owl & Stump Rare Plant Nursery, has her own company - **FIG TREE GREENSCAPING**: Garden Maintenance & Design. If you need some help, please contact her at 250-729-9644, glovkab@gmail.com

PLANT PORTRAITS

By John Husbands

<http://portraitsofalpineplants.com>



Polygala calcarea 'Lillet' (The generic name is derived from the Greek polys, much or many, and gala, milk, as it was thought that its presence in pastures increased the milk yield in cattle) Hence the common name of milkwort.

P. calcarea is a widespread native of Western Europe including Great Britain and Ireland. It has prostrate dark-leaved stems and lax racemes of striking dark-blue flowers. The form Lillet is a much superior plant than the type, being more compact and very free-flowering. It was collected in the wild near Lillet in N.E. Spain. It appreciates a chalky soil, (I give it a generous handful of crushed tufa around its roots). It is not a long-lived plant, but cuttings root relatively easy, which will perpetuate this charming plant.

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**Dicentra cucullaria**. (From the Greek, dis - twice; and kentron - a spur, referring to the two spurs of the petals). The common name, "Dutchman's breeches" derives from the white flowers that look like upside-down baggy white breeches. It occurs mainly in the eastern half of North America, from Nova Scotia and southern Quebec, west to eastern North Dakota, and south to northern Georgia and eastern Oklahoma. It's typically habitat is a rich moist woodland, shaded banks and ledges in scattered locations, and it is especially abundant in the mountains. Small plants do take a season or two to fill out and get established, and soon after flowering the whole plant disappears underground; it is therefore important to remember where you have planted it! I grow this amongst other woodland dwellers in a fine composted bark. It grows to a height of 15 centimetres and flowers in the spring.

## **CODONOPSIS**

### **Climbing, Twining, Creeping Members of the Campanula Family**

**Results of My Experiments with the Bonnet Bellflowers so far:** The Codonopsis genus comes primarily from "The Roof of the World" - the Himalayas and surrounding areas. I am learning through trial and error that this herbaceous bunch prefers part-shaded roots and a well-drained acidic soil with adequate moisture in the heat of summer. I have been growing Campanulas since about 2005 when I ordered for the first time from the RHS Seed Programme. After acquiring Graham Nicholls book, "Dwarf Campanulas and Associate Genera",

I learned that there were other genera in the Campanulaceae such as *Phyteuma*, *Jasione* and *Codonopsis*. I ordered *Codonopsis viridiflora* from the RHS and started some seed successfully in 2009. I planted out 3 on the north side of the apartment building. They did well with part sun and moisture and climbed a good 4 - 5 feet and flowered spectacularly in the first year. Next February I had to dig and move them to the south side of the building but fortunately two of the herbaceous crowns established well. I lucked out in the massive power pole in my new rock garden area. I planted them on the north side at its base and added a trellis and climbing poles to encourage them to scramble up.

Pleased with my success with *C. viridiflora*, I ordered from Chiltern Seeds in Cumbria, UK, seed of *C. pilosula* and *C. dicentrifolia* and started them in 2010. I was successful and one *C. pilosula* I gave away flowered in 2010. Another *C. pilosula* is planted on the north side of a panel of reclaimed lattice fencing - quite a shady location, and it had its first flower in 2011. Another *C. pilosula*, I planted on the west side of the power pole in spring 2011 and it climbed a teepee of beanpoles and flowered quite well that year - its roots are shaded by some *Campanula makaschvilii*, a *Gentiana tibetica* and *Achillea*. *C. dicentrifolia* is also planted in front of the lattice where its roots are shaded and it is making a mound each year. One species described as a scrambler is *C. clematidea*. This I purchased in 2011 from Beaver Creek. In a large pot, sunk in the ground at one side of the rock garden where it gets later afternoon shade, it did well in 2011 but is suffering a bit this year. I have learned that they all truly need cool and moisture at the roots.



*C. viridiflora*, wild and twiney, and Covered in buds and bells



*C. viridiflora*, making a bid for the Birdhouse, 2012



*C. pilosula*, run out of pole and scrambling onto another trellis Where it is entwined with a clematis



This year I have tried seed of a number of different species:

All started January 2012, a scatter of seeds, surface sown, under grow light, under dome, on hot mat, these all sprouted:

*C. dicentrifolia* - from garden collected seed

*C. forrestii* - from AGS 2011 seed

*C. gracilis* - from AGS 2011 seed

*C. grey-wilson* - from SRGC 2011 seed

*C. grey-wilson Himal Snow* - from SRGC 2011 seed

*C. rotundifolia* - from AGS 2011 seed

*C. thalict trifolia* - from AGS 2011 seed

*C. vinciflora* - from Vojtech Holubec seed

From SRGC 2011 seed, started late January 2012, a scatter of seed, surface sown, under grow light, under dome, on hot mat, for 3 months, then outdoor treatment, these sprouted:

*C. bhutanica*

*C. meleagris*

The *C. vinciflora* and *C. forrestii* proved the most vigorous. Part of the problem has been my own - they do need shading at the roots and adequate moisture and these I did not provide early on in my nursery this year and as a result the *C. grey-wilsonii* have not survived. Ah well, next year. I have also discovered on further internet research (Crug Farm website is particularly good, <http://www.mailorder.crug-farm.co.uk/default.aspx>) that they generally prefer an acidic soil, so am taking that more into account in my potting mix. And a well-drained position, no problem there in a rock garden.

**DISASTER** - beginning July 2012 - All my *C. forrestii*, *C. gracilis*, *C. thalict trifolia* and *C. vinciflora* have succumbed to predation. The first few were seen off by slugs. I shored up the defences (copper mesh under the trays), but the last were devoured as well. With no more slugs in sight, I think now that there is a bird with a taste for *Codonopsis* seedlings. The tray was in a shaded spot in the nursery, protected from deer, but open to the sky. Fortunately I still have 2 strong *C. meleagris* and 1 iffy *C. bhutanica* (I allowed this one to stay too long in its seed pot and the root tore a bit when I potted it on) under cover and will make sure in future to keep young plants under domes or shade cloth. Thinking back I kept my previous *Codonopsis* starts in my mini greenhouse until they were quite large.

So, if you can provide a site with shade at the roots (like clematis) and acidic soil, and want some climbers, scramblers with interesting bellflowers and not attractive to deer (so far anyway), then do give the *Codonopsis* clan a try. The leaves smell a bit foxy when brushed but the variety of flower colouration and the interior décor of the bells make them a very interesting addition to the garden.

## LOVELY BELL SHAPES AND INTERIOR DÉCOR



*C. dicentrifolia*, 2011



*C. clematidea*, 2011



*C. pilosula*, 2011



*C. viridiflora*, 2012

### Further Reading:

**Plant Heritage UK National Collection of Codonopsis** - Paul Kneebone's website, <http://www.kneebone.freeserve.co.uk/> This does not seem to be active, but has a wealth of information available.

**Rock Garden Plants: A Color Encyclopedia**, by Baldassare Mineo (Timber Press, 1999), p. 77  
**Campanulas and Bellflowers in Cultivation** by H. Clifford Crook (Blandford Press, 1959), pp 62-68

**Dwarf Campanula and Associated Genera**, by Graham Nicholls (Timber Press, 2006), pp 201-204

**The Himalayan Garden: Growing Plants from the Roof of the World**, by Jim Jermyn (Timber Press, 2001), pp 110-112