



"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Journal of the
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

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

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FROM THE EDITOR

Please share your photos, tips & tricks, sources, portraits of favourite plants, reviews of useful books, etc. Contributions are gratefully received at Melanson.valerie@gmail.com.

Deadlines for 2017: January 15th for Winter issue, March 15th for Early Spring, June 15th for Late Spring-Early Summer, August 15th for Late Summer, October 15th for Fall.

UPCOMING AGCVI SPECIAL EVENTS

MARK THESE 2017 SPECIAL SPEAKERS ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW. MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW IN THE WINTER ISSUE.

April 24 - David Sellars

May 8 - Alan McMurtrie of reticulatas.com

OTHER EVENTS TO NOTE

(with thanks to Maggie Young, editor of the International Rock Gardener, for these details)

3rd CZECH INTERNATIONAL ROCK GARDEN CONFERENCE

Booking for the is going well but filling up fast

Registration is still open,

see <http://czrgs.cz/conference-registration2.html>

The Event is planned for 10 - 15th May 2017 at the Congress and Educational Centre Hotel Průhonice, only 15 kilometres from the centre of Prague in the vicinity of the castle and two state parks of Průhonice which is 24 kilometres from Prague Ruzyne Airport and just a hop from the highway D1 Prague-Brno.

The main idea is to have very compact economic conference connecting attractive lectures and exploring the best local rock gardens plus, of course, the May Alpine Show of the Prague Club and the medieval baroque parts of Prague.

David Rankin (Scotland): The modern plant hunter: searching for long-lost primulas

Robert Wallis (England): Flying to the Heights of Turkey: some highlights of the mountains

Brigitte Fiebig and Michael Mauser (Germany): Persian treasures for the Alpinehouse, Tracing Dionysias in Iran - Impressions of Dionysias in their natural habitat from trips in 2015 and 2016)

Henrik Zetterlund (Sweden): My favorite bulbs and how I use them in different gardens

Panayoti Kelaidis (USA): Keeping in Steppe: cushions and rock plants from the semi-arid plateaus of the world, and how to grow them in a garden setting

Martin Hajman (Norway): The arctic rock garden in Tromsø. Rock garden construction and excellent conditions for growing of high altitude plants

Vojtěch Holubec (CZ): Chinese flowering Paradise

Zdeněk Zvolánek (CZ): The Crevice Garden and its Plants

**NEWS FROM THE BEAUTY SLOPE
IN THE CZECH KARST**
Report & photos by Zdeněk Zvolánek
With additional photo by Harry Jans

ZZ reports that he has been incredibly busy this summer with a visitor from Pennsylvania - a friend of Panayoti Kelaidis, and with preparations for the next International Rock Garden Conference (almost fully subscribed - see elsewhere this issue). Meanwhile The Beauty Slope has been too dry for the many plants. Some *Daphnes* died in September after prolonged torture during a very hot summer. The *Zauschnerias* are tired at the end of their long show. But the *Cyclamen* are now happily in flower.



L: There is now a golden rush of *Sternbergia lutea*. R: in the Peloponnessos they can make a swarm (from a photo by Harry Jans).



More dwarf *Sternbergia sicula* and Turkish *Cyclamen mirabile* and



Cyclamen cilicium

Cyclamen cilicium grows often in cracks of limestone rock at the lower levels of the massif Bolgar Dag in Central Anatolia, so I planted it into crevice between two limestone stones.

Jiří Papoušek's Alpine Tunnel

His photos forwarded with intro from Zdeněk Zvolánek

My friend Jiří Papoušek (he says, he is my pupil), gave me some photos of his



alpine tunnel.



It is partly a new growing technique.



There is of course *Daphne petraea* 'Persebee' (L), R: *Daphne malyana*.



L: *Daphne arbuscula* 'Czech Crystal', R: *Dionysia afghanica*

ZZ has sent along some notes:

Benefits of the tufa wall tunnel:

Free roots, frost free, no repotting, easy ventilation, utilization of tufa properties, controlled watering, a natural look, an earlier blooming season, high capacity.

Key Facts about Jiří's Tufa Wall Tunnel:

10 metres long, 3 metres wide, 1.5 - 1.8 metre high slope, 20 square metres, 50 cubic metres, west oriented slope, runs south to north, holds 300 plants, 0-39C degrees, good evaporation, shading, no heating system. Jiří has added closing doors at both ends of the cover.

Summer Flowers at Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden
photos by Elaine Bohm and write-up by Karen Unruh

This summer, the pink blossoms stole all the attention at Eswyn's Garden. It was delightful to find passers-by noticing the cushion of pink bloom on



this *Acantholimon*

Species, a gift from Paul Spriggs, planted in a crevice garden. This evergreen low shrub belongs to a genus of small flowering plants in the *Plumbaginaceae* family. It is a Mediterranean plant that needs good drainage, so planting in a tall crevice is ideal.

Moving from this low, compact shrub, the tall, open



Dierama pulcherrimum, commonly known as 'Angel's Fishing Rod', certainly attracts attention, with its graceful arching flower stems and bell shaped blooms. And it is a treat for us, as caretakers of the garden as well. We did not realize that we had brought a corm for this plant from Eswyn's garden, as the plant was dormant at the time of the move. It would have been included in the soil of another plant at the time.



Rhododendron 'Pink Pancake' is an evergreen azalea. It is a low, spreading shrub with light salmon-pink flowers in early summer. Ours was donated by AGCVI member, Barbara Kulla. It is planted on a rock ledge just behind the *Styrax japonica* tree, receiving dappled shade to extend its summer blooming time and horizontal growth across the rocks.



This pink flowering *Astilbe* sp. came to us from Eswyn's Garden. A compliment to alpine plants, it has attractive leaves and stems, but really gets the attention when the plumes of tiny flowers appear in midsummer. It is long blooming. Also, it is within the family *Saxifragaceae*, native to mountain ravines, both in North America and in Asia, and may have been the reason that Eswyn chose this plant for her garden.

Frank Hovenden prunes the pine tree at Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden

After our AGCVI meeting in August, held at Nanoose Place, we invited our guest speaker Frank Hovenden, Forester and Bonsai expert, to give us advice about some of our shrubs in Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden.



The pine tree at the top of the garden is one that needed some help to create an inviting approach to the garden. Frank was generous in his offer to come and prune this tree for us. And he did. And most wonderfully, he explained each cut that he made and gave us a wonderful lesson in creating art in the garden.



(the pine before pruning)

The two pictures below are of the finished result, at this time. Additional pruning in the style that Frank taught us will be needed as the tree recovers from this first shaping.



But this is a wonderful start. As Frank says, "You need to form a collection of clouds with room for the birds to fly through".

The Key to Growing *Meconopsis*

By David Sellars



I have been growing *Meconopsis* for about 10 years, basically following the excellent advice in Bill Terry's book Blue Heaven. To get enough plants I start them from seed in February and plant them out as early as possible in the summer. Sometimes the plants grow like cabbages and others struggle to survive. I have finally figured out how to achieve more consistency.

Basically, if you want to grow *Meconopsis* like cabbages, then you have to grow them like cabbages. This means using plenty of rich garden compost in the bed and even more in the planting hole. Normally I use leaf mould mixed into the soil for woodland plants but it does not have enough nutrients for *Meconopsis*. Bill Terry is very clear on this in his book: "To prepare the bed, dig well, dig deeply, dig to a foot or more and generously invigorate the soil with moisture-retentive coarse compost and manure." When I have followed this advice the *Meconopsis* have grown like cabbages. When I forget and just use leaf mould as a soil amendment, the plants struggle.

While compost and manure is important, *Meconopsis* plants have other needs that differ from cabbages. They must be grown in partial shade and a well-drained acidic soil. My favourite is *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' which has huge deep blue flowers. It comes true from seed and there is usually seed available in the seed exchanges.



Meconopsis 'Lingholm'

PLANT PORTRAIT - *Dionysia bryoides*
By Ger van den Beuken, The Netherlands



Habitat

Like almost all other *Dionysia* species, *Dionysia bryoides* is an endemic plant of the Zagros mountain range in the southwest of Iran. It grows on north or northwest facing limestone cliffs in semi- shaded and shaded crevices, at an altitude of 2,000 to 2,800 metres.

The plants forms dense, deep green cushions with short branched stems that become woody as they age. Cushions can grow sometimes up to more than 35 centimetres across. The flowers can range from pale pink to dark purple with a white centre. The leaves are hairless but are covered instead with numerous minute glands.



Dionysia bryoides ... 4 forms in the centre of the photo, grown by Ger van den Beuken. These were collected on an expedition to Iran by a group of German plant hunters - Jäger, Löbke, Mayr, Stopp

Cultivation

Being difficult to propagate, *Dionysia bryoides* was rarely seen in cultivation in the past. However, thanks to several botanical expeditions, different clones are available now from some expert growers. The culture of *Dionysias* is not easy, as they need the right conditions like a glass covered raised bed or more conveniently an alpine house with a lot of air movement.

My collection is grown in clay pots sunken in a deep sandbed with a watering system from beneath. The alpine house is surrounded with louvres to provide plants with air. Besides this I'm using 2 big vents for additional air movement. Good light conditions are also essential, but too bright sun will burn the plants during summer very quickly. Therefore, shading is a must. The substrate I use is a mix of pumice, seramis, perlite, coarse sand and a very small addition of peat. Repotting the plants is necessary every 2 years.

Propagation

My way of propagation is only from cuttings. This is a very difficult job and the rooting results are often disappointing. The cutting substrate is a mix of very fine perlite and coarse sand. The cuttings are inserted in this mix, moistened beforehand and covered with a transparent lid, then kept out of direct sunlight. Springtime immediately after flowering, when the plants show new growth, is the best time for taking cuttings. Seeds are rarely seen due to lack of good pollinators, so this is not an option.

When giving a talk last winter in New Zealand, somebody was shouting from the back of the hall: ... "It's a shame, I can clearly see the pollen from here, that means hand pollination would be a possibility." ... but I leave that job to other people.



L: *Dionysia bryoides* 'Bolero', R: *Dionysia bryoides* 'Henrik Zetterlund'

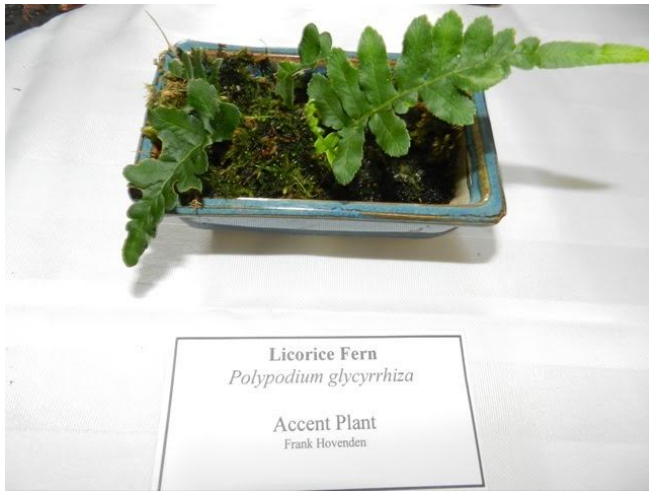
AGCVI EVENT REPORTS

FRANK HOVENDEN TALK on "An Introduction to Bonsai on Vancouver Island", August 29th at Nanoose Place photos by Kirsten Juergensen



Frank Hovenden and partner, Krista Kaptein and a display of some of Frank's bonsai & companion plants.





BONSAI CONTACT INFORMATION & SOURCES **with thanks to Frank Hovenden**

Local Clubs

Campbell River Bonsai Club

Monthly meetings at Sybill Andrews Cottage, Willow Point, Weds.

At 7:00 Contact Graham Hues - [250 923-8226](tel:2509238226)

Mt. Arrowsmith Bonsai Club

Monthly meetings at The Old School House Gallery, Qualicum, Sat.

At 1:30 Contact Frank Corrigan -

fcorrigan@gmail.com

Bonsai Gardens

Horticultural Centre of the Pacific - AKA Glendale

505 Quayle Rd, Victoria, BC V9E 2J7

Pacific Rim Bonsai Museum

2515 S. 336th St. Federal Way, WA 98003

[253.353.7345](tel:2533537345)

Websites

<http://www.bonsai4me.com/> Bonsai for me; lots of information on different tree species and how to care for them

<http://www.victoriabonsai.bc.ca/> The Victoria Club produces a monthly newsletter with lots of pertinent information for Vancouver Island bonsai enthusiasts

http://www.kaizenbonsai.com/bonsai_videos Graham Potter produces amazing Youtube videos which are both inspiring and instructional.

SHOW WHAT YOU GROW: Mike Miller showed:



L: *Cyclamen intaminatum*, R: *Sternbergia sicula* var. *graeca*



Calanthe reflexa



Nerine masoniorum - Mike writes: It is a rare plant on the Cape and only known from one location. I got it from Wallis seed last year.

**MIKE KINTGEN TALK on "The Great Rock Gardens of Europe",
September 12th**

at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre
photos by Kirsten Juergensen



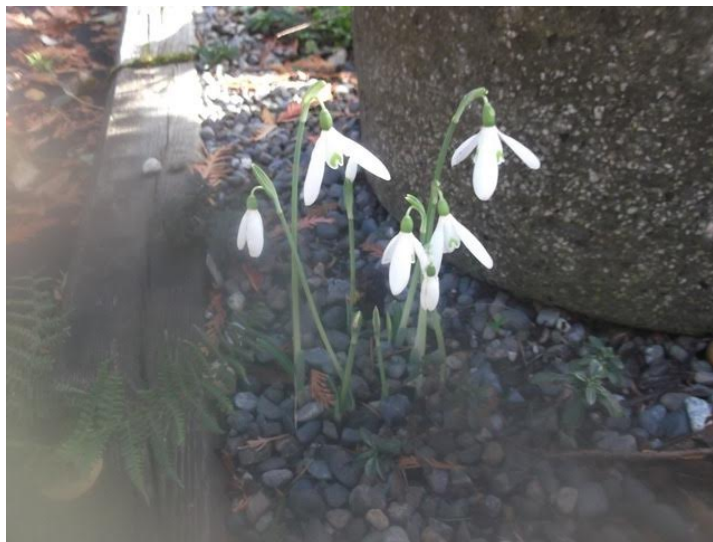
L: Mike Kintgen with Paul Spriggs from VIRAGS, R: Mike Kintgen with "Steppes" in which he authored the section on Patagonia



Amaryllis belladonna, shown by Mike Miller. Mike noted that he bought the hardy bulb in 2009. This year it had 5 spikes - 1 had 12 blooms, 1 had 11, 2 had 8 and 1 had 6.

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - June Strandberg

Early October:



Galanthus reginae-olgae from Archibald seeds



L: *Cyclamen hederifolium*, R: *Evolvulus* sp.: June writes: It's an annual but blooms all summer right up till the frost gets it. It's in all the nurseries.



Erigeron aureus - It also blooms all summer till frost. It seeds around a bit but is not hard to control.



L: *Crocus asumaniae* & R: *Crocus* sp.



L: *Globularia* sp. and R: *Silene serpentinicola* from Alplains Seeds sown November 2015

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN – Kirsten Juergensen

By the end of August, *Cyclamen* were coming on strong in Kirsten's garden:



On September 5th, Kirsten was enjoying:



Habranthus tubispathus, Rio Grande Copperlily, a bulbous perennial, with narrow blue-green leaves that bear coppery funnel-shaped flowers sporadically from summer to fall. Plant in fertile, well-drained soil in full sun. They self-seed freely. 10-12" high, zone 8. Native to Southern USA, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean.



Zephyranthes robusta syn. *Habranthus robustus*, Zephyr Lily or Rain Lily, an upright, bulbous perennial with solitary, white, funnel-shaped flowers from summer to fall. Grow in moist, well-drained soil in full sun. 8-12" High, native to South Eastern USA, Central and South America (e.g. Brazil).