

# "THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

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Part 2

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS:

### PART 2:

Pages 23-24: Eswyn Alpine & Rock Garden Report by Elaine Bohm

Pages 24-31: What's New in My Garden: Bernie Guyader, Cecil Woods, Sue Beatty, Kirsten Juergensen & Late Breaking News.

Pages 32-37: Portrait of a Genus: Color the year with Gentians by Bernie Guyader

Page 38: Plant Portraits: *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue' by Zdenek Zvolanek

## REPORT FROM THE ESWYN ALPINE & ROCK GARDEN

### FLOWERS FROM THE LAST COUPLE OF WEEKS

photos from Elaine Bohm



L: *Gentiana tibetica* fr. Valerie Melanson, R: *Campanula aucheri* fr. June Strandberg



L: *Gentiana* fr. Eswyn's home, R: *Geranium cinereum* 'Ballerina', flowering in crevice bed

## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - BERNIE GUYADER



*Armeria*



*Gentiana lutea*





L to R: *Bruckenthalia spiculifolia*, *Gentiana* hybrid and *Lewisia*

A bevy of *Campanula*:



*Campanula betulifolia*



*Campanula garganica*





*Campanula pilosa*



*Dianthus, Rhododendron kiusianum and Azalea*





*Draba, Lewisia, Campanula and Sedum*



*Gypsophila repens 'Rosea'*



*Hypericum olympicum*





*Moltkia intermedia*



*Penstemon hirsutus* var. *pygmaeus*



*Rhodohypoxis*



*Saponaria*



*Sempervivum* and *Tanacetum*



## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - CECIL WOODS

Cecil writes: "I am new to rock gardens and this is my first attempt at using rockery plants. The pond is a pre-formed kidney-shape into which I had planted water plants. Resident raccoons kept pulling the plants out of the pond so I opted for rockery plants around the corners of the kidney into which I put a soil mix and pea gravel - planting *Armeria*, *Arabis ferdinandi-coburgi*, *Sempervivum*, *Sedum* and *Hypericum* (I think). A pump under the turtle puts water into a flat dish with rocks in it. Small birds seem to like to drink and bath in it.



The Eswyn garden in Nanoose inspired to me to take an interest in rock gardens. I am researching garden construction and, with my wheelbarrow, taking donations of suitable rocks from neighbours. If other members could offer some research sources or some tips I would be most appreciative." Cecil Woods, cwoods3@shaw.ca

## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - KIRSTEN JURGENSEN

Kirsten sent along these photos of another plant the editor grew from seed:



*Gentiana tibetica* - you would expect some blue, being a *Gentian*, but this species has white to creamy flowers.

## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - SUE BEATTY



The chocolate ball sedum (*Sedum hakonense* 'Chocolate Ball') I got at Cultivate a couple of years ago. I really like it - it has a period where it just looks brown and dead but then the colors change again.



The *Hypericum* I got from an



alpine plant sale and I love, love, love it. It really adds a lot of color all the time but when there's not much else, it's even more beautiful.



*Hemerocallis* (day lily) always look beautiful though I'm not sure all what colors I have since the deer usually get to them before me. I got most of them from a friend so I have no idea what any of them are but they sure add a lot of color - this one is falling into my Bee Balm (*Monarda*). I have a few different *Monarda* and this one I got a couple of years ago from a nursery and the tag said red and since hummers and bees love it I got it - it's not what I'd call a true red though. Geraniums are wonderful (in pots) and I have a few that add color anywhere - shade or sun as they don't seem to be too fussy. Unfortunately I had them in the ground at first before I realized they took over, but at least they're a bright, sunny thug.

## **LATE BREAKING NEWS**

A VERY BIG CONGRATULATIONS to our member Lori Pross. Lori and Nick's front garden has been recognized by the Town of Qualicum Beach Select Committee for Communities in Bloom as having GREAT CURB APPEAL. As Lori notes they haven't even seen the backyard, which includes Lori's crevice and sedum/succulent beds as shown in the last "Crevice". Well done, Lori and Nick!!

## PORTRAIT OF A GENUS

### COLOUR THE YEAR WITH GENTIANAS

by Bernie Guyader

When any mention is made of *Gentians*, most people think of the large blue trumpets of *Gentiana acaulis*.



*Gentiana acaulis*

However, as there are more than 400 species of *Gentians*, the color range is fairly wide. From the deep blue of *G. acaulis* to the white of *Gentiana saxosa* from New Zealand, as well as a wide variety of colours in the blue to yellow shades, there is a succession of bloom throughout the year, from the spring gentian (*G. verna*) to *G. sino-ornata*



*Gentiana sino-ornata*



in December. They can be fussy, maybe even difficult, but I think they are worth every effort it takes to make them happy.

The plants that are most likely to be available, fall into these three groups. The Acaulis group, blooming in May and June, consist of *G. alpina*, *clusii*,



*Gentiana clusii*

*dinarica*, *kochiana* and *G. acaulis* itself.

The Decumbens group, which are larger leaved and can be used in a shady corner of the garden, is made up of *Gentiana decumbens*, *gracilipes*, *frigida* and *puberulenta*. The latter enjoys a dry sunny location. These bloom from June to August.



*Gentiana puberulenta*

Then we have the Septemfida types: *G. septemfida*, *kaufmania*, *lagodechiana* and *gelida*.

Now, for continuity of blossom, first, as I've mentioned is *G. verna* with a brilliant blue star shaped flower about an inch across. It normally grows in moist scree. I have had success growing them in pots as well as the scree with plenty of leaf mould and pea gravel for drainage; sadly with the changing conditions in my garden I no longer have them. They come easily from seed if the seed is available from the seed exchanges. Blossoming at the same time, or shortly after, is the Acaulis group. These have the large trumpet of deep gentian blue, probably the most familiar of all. They will grow well in ordinary garden soil, in full sun with good drainage. They have been known to be shy in blooming for no apparent reason, but I have had them do well in many areas of my garden as well as in pots.

*G. saxosa*, from New Zealand, with its white blossoms, and *glauca* with its small blue or white blossoms come next. *G. saxosa* likes a sandy soil. Both of these like full sun and a well-drained location. These I found were short lived and I no longer have them in my garden.

Next come the plants of the Decumbens group. They cannot be compared with the spring gentians for beauty but they do give a show of color in June and July. Their blossoms, which are smaller, occur in the axils of the uppermost leaves these have a variety of cultural requirements from a shady moist soil to a dry sunny location, you should enquire as to the requirements when you get your plants. I should mention, blooming at this time is the giant of the species, *G. lutea*. It grows 100cm tall, and as its name suggests, it is yellow.



*Gentiana lutea*



In July and August the Septemfida group begin to show color. These enjoy full sun and good drainage in ordinary garden soil. The blossom colour ranges from the purple side of blue and green/ blue and are quite long lasting. *G. gelida* which is a relative of septemfida, has yellow blossoms, so it provides quite a contrast. Also blooming at this time is one of my favourites *Gentiana paradoxa*.



*Gentiana paradoxa*

I think the best blue of the summer flowering gentians. Also I should mention *G. sceptrum*, which you can see in Paradise meadows in August and another western native *G. calycosa*.



*Gentiana sceptrum*

Also blooming at this time is, the willow gentian, in the wild it enjoys a shady location with cool moist soil.



*Gentiana asclepiadea* 'Alba' (left) and blue form (right)

In our garden it has sown itself in many locations. It is taller, approximately 60 cm, and is available in blue or white and has arching foliage.

To complete the year we have *G. sino-ornata* with its royal blue trumpet which has darker blue stripes on the outside and all its Asian affiliates and hybrids. It prefers a little more shade and moisture as well. I find it is very effective when planted near the Christmas rose (*Helleborus niger*) which gives a colourful contrast sometimes into late December. It is also a good companion plant for Rhododendrons.

There are many others that might be available in the seed exchanges, including *G. sandiensis* from Peru which blossoms from December to February.

This lists only a few of the gentians that are available for year round enjoyment. They are all relatively easy from seed. I plant my seeds in pots in October and leave them outside through the winter, they usually germinate in the spring.

Some plants may be available at your local nursery. Seeds are available, free to members, from the various alpine groups such as: The Alpine Garden Club of BC, The Scottish Rock Garden Club, The North American Rock Garden Society and The Alpine Garden Society, through their seed exchanges.





*Gentiana brachyphylla*



*Gentiana cachemirica*



*Gentiana tibetica*



*a garden hybrid*

For further information on the Genus *Gentiana* refer to any of the following;

Gentians by Mary Bartlett

Gentians by David Wilkie

Rock Gardening by H. Lincoln Foster

Manual of Alpine Plants by Will Ingerwersen

The Genus Gentiana by Josef J. Halda, Illustrated by Jarmilla Haldova

## PLANT PORTRAIT - *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'

### ABERDEEN CORYDALIS

by Zdenek Zvolanek, photos by Ian Young

I am very sorry not to have a finely moist woodland garden because of my steep steppe southern slope. But I enjoy pictures of the rich gardens of my friends with natural northern light shade under or among trees in cool Scotland. And I am sure that everybody with an aesthetical feeling will have deep pleasure to see some pictures from this special latitude. Great bulb master Ian Young sent me today two pictures of his woodland *Corydalis* hybrid for illustration in my journal, Skalnicky.

The plant is offered by Welsh Aberconwy Nursery and is perfect because of its electric blue colour. It is Ian's seedling named after his and Maggi Young's great Craigton garden, *Corydalis* 'Craigton Blue'. At present it is at its best, filling the garden with a delicious scent of honey. His plant is in glorious bloom, so Ian will bring it to a committee. I have in one place with hot semishade a crevice filled with *Dicentra* x 'King of Hearts', which I have smuggled from Victoria, BC to the Beauty Slope. It is relatively happy suffering in our lowland condition. So I visualize a broad crevice with eastern aspect filled with this blue cultivar of *Corydalis*, somewhere on your Vancouver Island. I wish you happy imports from the UK.



Editor's Note: ZZ notes that there are also *Erythronium* and *Narcissus* cultivars with the Craigton name.