



"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Journal of the
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

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

Issue # 39

Part 1

Winter 2015-2016

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FROM THE EDITOR: Your contributions are gratefully received. Please send to
Melanson.valerie@gmail.com.

Next deadlines: March 15th, for the Early Spring & June 15th for the Late Spring-Early Summer issue. If you are missing any of the earlier issues of "Crevice" referred to in the articles following, please get in touch and I will send them along.

UPCOMING AGCVI SPECIAL EVENTS

Watch this space for all the details of **special speakers** coming this spring to the AGCVI. In the meantime mark your calendars for the following:

April 25th - **Malcolm McGregor** from UK on **A World Full of Saxifrages.**

May 30th - **David Sellars** - two talks - **Pyrenees Flora in Perspective: From Andorra to Gavarie** & **Photographing Alpine Plants: A Landscape Point of View.**

BOTANIC GARDEN REPORTS

John Mitchell originally reported on the construction of a new Alpine House and surrounds in "The Crevice" # 14, January 2013 & "The Crevice" # 19, part 1, June 2013. Here he brings us up to date.

UPDATE ON THE TUFA HOUSE **at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh**

by John Mitchell, Garden Supervisor, Alpine Section, RBGE



Summer 2015

With the new tufa house at Edinburgh now in its 3rd growing season all of the plants are looking good. The first year, when we originally planted over 250 plants in the tufa wall, we had one of our warmest summers for at least 10 years, which did not help the delicate plants, which we planted into the wall. After making a quick fix with temporary shading the plants have survived extremely well. Over the first year we lost roughly 10% of plants. This was expected but still disappointing. Over the next year we replanted and have had better results. It was very interesting in the first year - plants like *Dionysia* and *Draba* established very quickly in the tufa and have formed large patches. Some of the more difficult species like *Dionysia iranica* have taken longer to establish.



Plants that I would have thought would have grown very quickly were the *Primula allionii* ,



Primula allionii

but these plants have sulked but now are starting to put growth on and the intention is for these plants to form large mats covering the tufa. *Daphnes* are extremely slow to get their roots down, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are starting to see lots of new growth on the *Daphne petraea* and we have very nice small domes starting to appear on the wall and *Daphne jasminea*- both forms have flowered and are looking stunning.



Daphne jasminea

European Campanulas have taken over - *Campanula raineri* with its very large white flowers, *C. morettiana* with purple flowers and the largest of all is *C. fragilis* with extremely large blue flowers and that has a trailing effect on the tufa



Campanula raineri



Campanula morettiana



Campanula fragilis

The rest of the species in the wall are growing from strength to strength - *Paraquilegia anemonoides* and *Physoplexis comosa* have started seeding about the house, which is great to see.



Physoplexis comosa



The rest of the area has established and plants are seeding around. *Saxifraga longifolia* is the main plant planted through the whole area and these rosettes are looking stunning and when they flower will produce an amazing display. *Edraianthus* have also been sown on the tufa outside and when this get established will cover the tufa in blue and purple.



Saxifraga longifolia

One of the newer areas which we are progressing is the alpine meadow above the crevice garden where we have planted in various Fritillaries, Tulips & Narcissi. The idea was to have steppe herbaceous growing as well but we have had a slight problem with the grass growing too vigorous so we have stripped back the grass and will re-sow and hopefully this will give us a chance to be able to grow some of these plants.

Since we have built this new house the response from the visitors has been great. We have had great comments about the landscape and plantings. Our next project is to refurbish the traditional alpine house. It was built in the mid 1970s by the late Alf Evans - we are in the process of applying for grants to rebuild this area to exactly the same specifications as this was a very traditional way of growing and showing alpines.

Favourite plants in Tromsø Arctic Alpine Botanic Garden in 2015

By Kristian Nyvoll,
Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden
Tromsø Museum, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

This is the time to open the folder of pictures taken last season, and now I recall some pleasant memories of plants in the botanic garden. Somehow I have ended up only presenting spring flowering plants and those coming into flower toward midsummer. I hope you all will enjoy them!



Draba hispanica var. *atlantica* from the Atlas Mountains in Morocco was the first to start flowering in the spring. Somewhat unexpected that this African should be just as fast as some arctic species!

In our surrounding nature *Saxifraga oppositifolia* is first in flower every year. In the Saxifrage collection there are many species growing at high altitudes just waiting for the snow to melt before budding out. Still some sections within the genus have species flowering later in the summer.



Saxifraga longifolia is a monocarpic species from the Pyrenees. The most wonderful symmetrical rosettes have been growing for several years, and then finally came into flower. This stem was close to 50 cm long and full of flowers.

In nature *Ranunculus wilanderi* is more rare than the Panda bear. This little Buttercup grows in the high arctic on the Archipelago of Svalbard. As a protective measure, the Botanic Garden grow some of the rarest and redlisted species in Norway.



Another high arctic species is *Arenaria pseudofrigida*. It performs very well in crevices and forms nice cushions that get covered with white flowers. It seems to tolerate full exposure to the sun and non-arctic temperatures as well.

Pulsatilla tatewakii we received from Sakhalin Botanical Garden. They had collected seeds on the banks of Uanga river. This summer we will replant a few from our Siberia collection, "The Kirovsk Garden", to our "Buttercup-collection" where we put together species within the family of Ranunculaceae.





Gray weather and no sun at midnight, at least the people from the cruise ships got to enjoy the first "Sun-flower" on *Wyethia helianthoides*. Planted in 2010, this was the first flower we got to see as well. Maybe some of you have seen it in its natural habitat?

Gentiana acaulis was once the supreme highlight in the *Gentiana*- collection. It's still wonderfull, but now some late flowering species makes me look forward to the end of the season with anticipation.



No longer able to take care of his garden, Ole P. Olsen donated all his valuable plants to the Botanic Garden, and thus provided us with a new delightful collection of Slipper Orchids. In the picture you see *Cypripedium x ventricosum*



To represent both the *Caucasus* collection and all the beautiful species within the family of *Campanulaceae*, I send you this picture of *Campanula aucheri*.

The Blue Poppy *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' is without a doubt the most famous of all the plants in our garden. Sometimes tourists trample on other plants just to get their pictures. Many Himalayan 'high alpine' within the genres of *Chremanthodium*, *Nomocharis*, *Primula*, *Rhododendron*, and *Sorbus* do very well in Tromsø.



FOLLOW UP ON ISSUE # 38:

On page 15 in a report on a visit to the VIRAGS Rock & Crevice Garden at Beacon Hill Park, there was a photo of a mystery gray plant with a request for help in identifying it. Bernie Guyader wrote in and gave an ID: *Artemisia schmidtiana*. He notes: "It is deciduous, so the winter wet doesn't seem to bother it".



at Beacon Hill Park

Also, following on a Plant Portrait, Issue # 38, pages 19-20, Bernie notes : "I grow *Gentiana sino-ornata* in my raised bed in front of the house with the dwarf rhodos. It does very well there. I also have it in a trough, it does well until the sun and heat gets to it. I've attached a couple of photos."



UPCOMING EVENTS OF NOTE

FEBRUARY 6th - Seedy Saturday at Qualicum Beach Civic Centre: MEETING GARDEN CHALLENGES. For details see: <http://www.qbseedysaturday.com/>

APRIL 2nd - AGCBC SPRING SHOW & SALE. See www.agc-bc.ca/shows-sales

APRIL 8 & 9th - VIRAGS SPRING SHOW & SALE. See www.virags.ca

JUNE 22 - 27TH - NARGS CONFERENCE, Steamboat Springs, CO. For More

PLEASE SEE FURTHER ARTICLES IN PART 2