



# "THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

Journal of the  
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island

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

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Fall 2015

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**FROM THE EDITOR:** Your contributions are gratefully received. Please send to  
[Melanson.valerie@gmail.com](mailto:Melanson.valerie@gmail.com).

Next deadlines: January 15, 2016, for the Winter & March 15, 2016, for the Early Spring.

Now that the days are shortening and the rainy season is closing in, my rock garden pretty much goes to sleep. Time for major construction projects and improvements - I have several in mind. Or, better, fun stuff to do in the greenhouse and indoors !



*Drosera capensis* v. *alba* plantlets, as viewed through a digital microscope, each 1 - 2 mm across, grown from seed collected in my garden in 2013. The mommy didn't survive our 2014/15 winter outside (it was an experiment ☺), but the seed proved very vigorous when sown in March 2015 on damp sphagnum moss in a closed container in an shaded greenhouse. By September there were dozens and dozens of young plantlets. I have now split the mass between two rose bowls, nestled on a wet layer of mixed peat and sand, partially covered to maintain humidity, and brought indoors under grow lights. It will be interesting to see how they fare and when I dare to try and pot up a few.



*Hesperantha coccinea* 'Major' syn. *Schizostylis coccinea*  
another good choice for fall colour. For more ideas, see two Plant Portraits in this issue.

## UPCOMING AGCVI SPECIAL EVENTS



Present

**Dr. Hans Roemer**



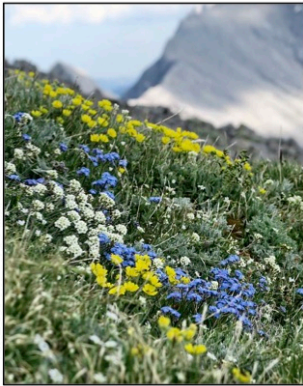
To speak on

**Alpines of the Rocky Mountains**

**Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, 1-3 p.m.**

**(doors open 12:30), East Hall, QB Civic Centre,  
747 Jones Street.**

**\$5 at door includes entry in prize draw & coffee/tea**



Alpine vegetation in the Rockies is subject to a climatic regimen different from what we have on the coast, with summers earlier, but sometimes also lasting longer than what we experience on the island, especially this year. In the Rockies we see alpine communities stretch over large areas. Dr. Roemer's recent impressions are from areas near the northern and southeastern boundaries of the province. Despite the great distance, they have many floral elements in common, even though they are combined in different plant communities, many of them of spectacular beauty.

Born and raised in southern Germany, Hans apprenticed in horticulture and studied landscape architecture & landscape ecology. He earned a PhD in plant ecology from the University of Victoria in 1972. He worked in conservation with the provincial Ecological Reserves Program & Provincial Park System. Since retiring in 2002, he has been working as a botanical consultant, mainly in rare plant inventories and monitoring. A member of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society for over 30 years, he has led many club outings to the mountains of Vancouver Island & northern Washington State. Most of his gardening is with bulbs and other drought-tolerant plants. He is a contributor to *Alpine Plants of British Columbia, Alberta & Northwest North America* by Pojar & MacKinnon (Lone Pine, 2013).

More information? Contact Valerie at [Melanson.valerie@gmail.com](mailto:Melanson.valerie@gmail.com) or 250-594-4423

## **REPORTS FROM "CREVICE" CORRESPONDENTS**

### **Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden Receives a Rock Mulch**

**written by Karen Unruh, photos by Elaine Bohm**

After four years of a pea gravel mulch, we know from information shared by the AGCVI speakers that we needed to look for a sharp edge small rock mulch. Three of our most influential teachers have shared their success with alpine plants in relation to plant mulch. David Sellars tells us of the Sechelt sharps; Zdenek Zvolanek suggests that sharp crushed chippings are a more natural alternative to washed pea gravel; and Paul Spriggs is using a crushed rock base for propagating plants. And if we look to Alpine Plants of British Columbia, Alberta & Northwest North America, authored in part by Hans Roemer, we read about alpine plants receiving nutrition from the minerals in the disintegrating rock in the alpine areas, in many places with no soil whatsoever.

As well, I read in their e-mails that the VIRAGS is having a work day spreading rock mulch at the rock garden at Beacon Hill Park in Victoria. I confess. Later I was in Victoria and visited this rock garden and was very impressed with the mulch. So much so, that I gathered a handful of mulch in a small bag, thank you, and we took that sample to Gerry Ozero of Ozero Sand & Gravel, to see if he could match it. He suggested a similar sharp mulch which he called 'Sidewalk Chips'. We purchased a load from him that he delivered to us, gratis, a community support we certainly appreciate.

We planned our workday around the schedule of two strong individuals we could hire to help us get the mulch in place. Jerry, the Nanoose Landscaper, and Seamus, a community lad, were hired to do the heavy work. We positioned ourselves throughout the garden prepping the area for the mulch and Jerry and Seamus filled our buckets with mulch and delivered them to us at our site ... over and over again. In addition, the area of the pathway next to the garden was well mulched to prevent weed growth and the spread of seeds to the garden. The sun came out and gave us encouragement for the work we were doing ... a successful day. Also pruning the pine tree into shape will accentuate the garden. Now we can see how the rain cleans up any rock dust and we are all ready for winter. Mind you, it may not get a mulch of snow such as in a true alpine area. .





Lorraine Wilhelm and Elaine Peterson with their completed work in front of them.



Gladys Kinsman and Mary Taylor begin the task of pruning the pine tree that overlooks the garden.





Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden at the completion of our day's work.

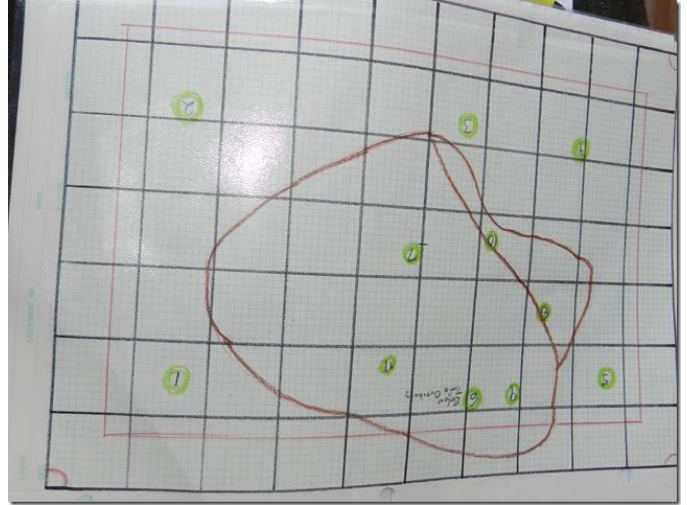
## **AGCVI ACTIVITIES REPORTS**

### **TUFA DISH GARDEN WORKSHOP**

**Report by Mary Taylor, photos by Kirsten Juergensen**

I have to say that I think 8 or 9 of us finally arrived at Jan and Toad's lovely property anxious to play with our tufa and pots and our hostess supplied good coffee and cookies . Mike gave a very informative explanation of what we needed to do and how to do it. Holes were put in many of our tufa pieces and we were able to plant a few baby plants. I think we all came home feeling like it was a morning well spent and wanting to do more. Off to find more suitable containers and supplies, I am sure. Thanks for the experience.





L: Workshop in progress, R: mapping out a planting plan



L: Mike demonstrating drilling holes in the tufa, R: drill and new tufa rock ready to go





L: removing drilled out tufa, R: mixing up filler to 'cement' plants in their new homes



L: Seedlings ready for insertion, R: one seedling in place

## MANNING PARK AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup> TO 14<sup>TH</sup> 2015

### Report and Photos by June Strandberg

Barb and I decided to check out Manning Park for future visits. We booked a room in Manning Park Lodge for a couple of nights - it had a microwave and fridge so we took some food and dishes and ate in or took bag lunches. First day we drove the switchbacks up Blackwall Road to the meadows.





View of lodge from  $\frac{1}{2}$  way up. Locals enjoy the look out too.

The temperature was inverted and very hot up there. The meadows parking lot is 1980m and Blackwall Peak is 2063m.



L: Alpine meadows just off the parking lot, R: further along the heather trail

First we went on a guided walk along the Heather Trails, there were not many flowers - just white yarrow, dwarf fireweed and western anemone seed heads all making quite a show. We did learn quite a few things - one of them being 'Don't go on guided walks as they go too fast, especially uphill!'

Leaving the group we found a spot to eat our lunch and then checked out the first part of the Paintbrush Trail, it goes past the Microwave Tower built by BC Tel and the reason why there is a paved road up to these meadows.



Paintbrush Trail heading toward the BC Tel tower

We did find a Paintbrush, with a few tiny late flowers, growing in the shade of the tower. We saw various small animals and some birds including a falcon, a Clark's Nutcracker and a grouse family.



L: Clark's Nutcracker, R: Paintbrush - *Castilleja* sp.

Usually flowers are still blooming in mid August but there, as in the rest of the area Spring came early and then summer turned hot and dry. We drove back down, thankful to get somewhere a bit cooler.

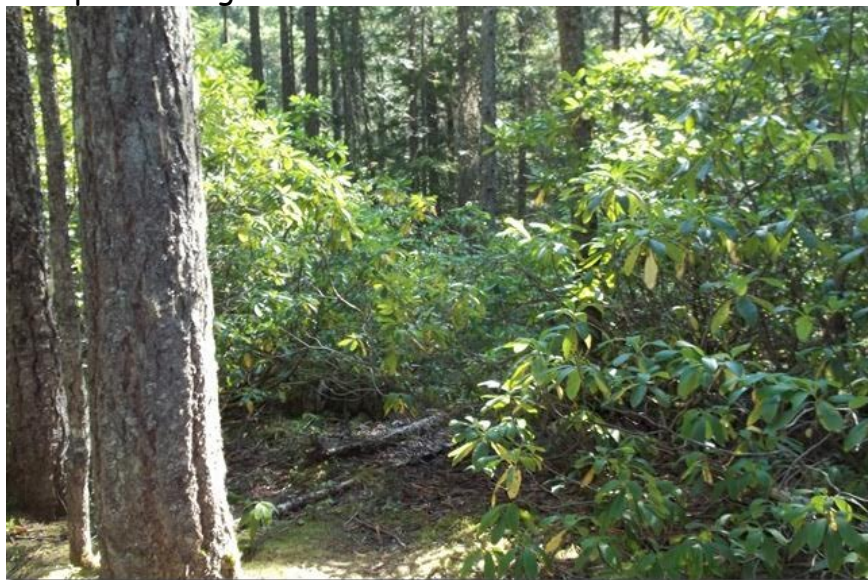


The next day we decided to stay lower so went on the Three Falls Trail, which starts just outside the gates (locked) of the ski hill. The trail is mostly through woods so was cooler and a few more flowers -



one-sided wintergreen a few small lupins, a daisy and some berries. There are still lots of standing snags from the fire of 1945 - almost hidden amongst the new growth. We went past a cabin and across the base of a ski hill and continued through the trees, it was getting hotter and the trail started doing lots of ups and downs. We met a group coming back from the Three Falls who said it was still a little way. So we decided to call it quits and go back to Lightning Lake to eat our lunch and get ice cream!

We were staying in Hope that night so called in at Rhododendron Flats on our way by.



Lots of very healthy looking *Rhododendron macrophyllum*,

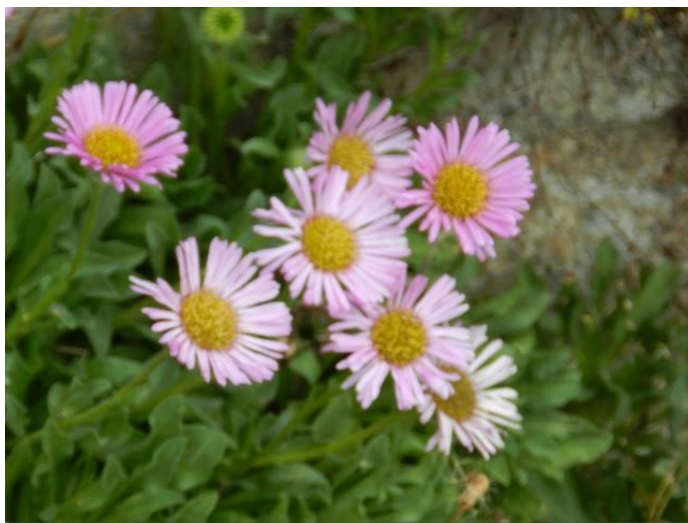


many with open seed pods that did not really look viable to me - I got some to check it out with Mike, but not got round to doing that yet .

Manning Park would be good for a 3 night stay - or longer if you want to do some uphill work! Manning Park Lodge is very comfortable and convenient for everything. But go in July when the meadows are in full bloom.

## **SEEN AT ESWYN'S ALPINE & ROCK GARDEN SEPTEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2015**

**Photos by Kirsten Juergensen**







## VISIT TO VIRAGS' BEACON HILL GARDEN

Photos by June Strandberg

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, several AGCVI members went down to the VIRAGS meeting to hear David Sellars speak on "The Joy of Sax" and attend the member plant sale. Mike, Dorothy and June ate their lunch by the VIRAGS garden and lake in Beacon Hill Park.



The rock garden





One of the crevice beds



L: a late or reblooming rhododendron, R: Crocus and Cyclamen in bloom





L: *Oreganum rotundifolium* in the rock garden, R: mystery gray plant in crevice bed



Mystery gray plant, can you help with an ID?



## PLANT PORTRAIT - *Galanthus reginae-olgae* ssp. *reginae-olgae*

by Valerie Melanson



The AGS website reports that this is "the earliest snowdrop, flowering in October under the plane trees of the Peloponnese in Greece, high in the Taygetos Mountains." At lower, more sheltered locations they flower from winter to spring. Native to south and NW Greece, Corfu and Sicily. It was first collected on Mt. Taygetos in 1876 by Greek botanist T. G. Orphanides, and named for Queen Olga of Greece.

The leaves follow the flowers. The plants are reported to be not as cold-tolerant as other snowdrops and it is recommended to plant them in a relatively warm and well-drained site, so they are good under trees and in a rock garden. In my rock garden they are partially sheltered by an overhanging trough and on a slight slope with exposure to the early morning sun. During the summer drought they may get some moisture from a weekly hand watering.

Bulbs obtained from June Strandberg, ex seed from Jim & Jenny Archibald.



References:

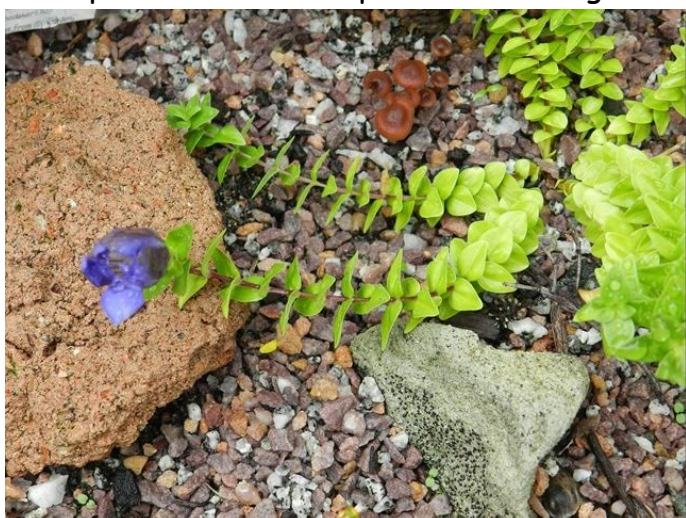
Naomi Slade, The Plant Lover's Guide to Snowdrops (Portland: Timber Press, 2014) pp. 170-171

Alpine Garden Society website, Plant of the Month and Portraits, about the other subspecies *vernalis*:

<http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/plants/plant-portraits/Galanthus+reginaeolgae+ssp+vernalis/19/>

## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Kirsten Juergensen

In September Kirsten spotted these signs of fall in her garden.



L: *Gentiana septemfida*, R: *Cyclamen hederifolium*



Colchicum being guarded by moose antlers? Maybe that will keep the deer away, just in case Kirsten's locals haven't read the memo about Colchicums tasting nasty.



## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Paddy Mark

September 2015 - Paddy spotted a huge *Cyclamen hederifolium* (species TBC, but likely), growing au naturel on a rock face under the roots of a Garry Oak Tree above her drive.



Close up of the huge tuber on right.

## WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Margot Moser





Margot writes: "You will likely recognize it as *Zauschneria garrettii* 'Orange Carpet' which I bought at the plant sale you held at your place 2 or 3 years ago. It has thrived with very little watering in a full-sun, south-facing location and has been blooming for weeks. You can see how poor the soil is! "

## PLANT PORTRAIT - *Gentiana sino-ornata*

By Valerie Melanson



The first and probably most important European find of a fall-flowering Asian species, it was discovered by George Forrest in moist places in NW Yunnan in 1904 and in the Lichiang mountain range in 1910. Seeds were sent to Edinburgh and Ness Botanic Gardens and flowered for the first time at RBGE in 1912. In the wild it grows in peaty, alpine meadows, from 2500 to 4800 metres, in the SW Chinese provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan & Gansu.

The AGS website stresses that "only those who garden on an acid soil or employ troughs and containers filled with a rich ericaceous compost sited in good light but with some shade in the south may succeed with this otherwise easy plant, for it detests any trace of lime in soil or water and will show its resentment by speedy departure. Watering must always be adequate and ample in hot weather."

Maybe it is a bit more flexible than that. My plant is now 5 years old, seems happy enough in a pot sunk in the rocks and has survived our summer droughts with only (sometimes) weekly



watering. We will see how it does now with all this fall rain. It does receive a bit of shade from the midday sun courtesy of a power pole and perhaps some surrounding plants.

In my garden it flowers in October. The trumpet like bloom is quite tall and vividly striped, coming from the tip of a stem that radiates from a central rosette. The leaves are linear, dark green and stiffish. To 8" high, 12-18" wide, Zones 5-8.

Grown from AGS seed given me by June Strandberg, sown March 27, 2010 in my mini greenhouse on a hot mat. Each year there are more buds.

#### References:

Fritz Kohlein, **Gentians** (Portland: Timber Press, 1991), pp. 23, 111-112.

Alpine Garden Society website' Plant of the Month section:

<http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/plants/plant-portraits/Gentiana+sinoornata+and+hybrids/54>

## WANTING TO READ UP ON PATAGONIAN ALPINE PLANTS & ECOSYSTEMS?

Check out the following, published by The Alpine Garden Society in 2013/2014:

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### Flowers of the Patagonian Mountains



Alpine  
Garden  
Society field guide

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### Patagonian Mountain Flower Holidays



Alpine  
Garden  
Society