

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

Issue # 9

Part 1

JULY 2012

From the Editor: Happily, June has been able to squeeze in writing the first of her reports on her UK Garden Trip. And more ... thank you, June. And thank you to John Husbands, our UK member, for a further two plant portraits. **DON'T FORGET: IT'S TIME TO START COLLECTING SEEDS FOR THE FALL SEED EXCHANGES.**

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TRIP TO THE U.K.



L to R: Vancouver Island Girls:
June, Louise, Laura, Shirley & Ann, waiting for the tour bus in St. Ives

ZZ's CREVICE GARDEN AT WISLEY

By June Strandberg

I arrived in England on May 2nd 2012 and the very next day went to the RHS's Wisley in Surrey - still my favourite place in spite of all the gardens I visited on the tour!! The weather was terrible, about 5c and pretty damp, I am so glad I took my toque, mitts and big winter coat. My fingers were white and numb but I still managed to take over 60 pictures of the crevice garden alone!

We (my brother and I) headed straight for it along the bottom path so we went up through the rock garden itself - more about that later - then past the tufa walls, two alpine houses and the troughs and there it was - in all its glory! with so many plants in flower due to the late spring - Rhodos, Daphnes, Gentians, Castilleja, Lancea, Phyteuma, Physoplexis, Allium, Clematis, Draba, Androsace, I can't name them all - if anyone would like me to send on my pictures let me know (I am no expert photographer)

It is quite large - much bigger than Paul's but I did not think to step it out and I am no good at judging size - it is longer than the alpine house.



Picture # 095



Picture # 113

Picture 095 is about the best I have and it shows the crafty little walkways for access. It has a recess cove in the front so you can go in and be really close to all the flowers. They needed so many plants - lots of seeds were sown and they received donations from members of the alpine clubs (we would love more donations for our crevice garden, it is looking rather bare!) They used lifting machines to place a lot the rocks, some of them are huge. There is still work to do on the chipping but the gravel looks good so maybe that is how it is to stay (see #082). The stones are varying shades from greyish to pinkish, sandstone from Mine Trane quarry in the Bixslade Valley in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. Some are small and thin (see # 113), some are small and chunky - increasing in size to pretty big! There are high cliffs and little valleys, deep gullies, and shady places, tiny crevices and bigger ones, smooth places and jagged places, gravelly screes and little meadows - in fact just about everything an alpine

might need if it can't have a real mountain!. The sides are large flat rocks and the ends are very intriguing (see photos). There were a few labels with no plant but on the whole everything was very healthy looking and full of bloom. I saw no sign of anything being dry due to the sand, but then, I don't think anything could be dry in the UK last May!! Maybe the interesting looking grit topping has fixed the problem. Anyway I just loved it and wanted to bring it home with me!! It is just wonderful ZZ!

I would have stayed there much longer - I think I need a whole week at least to really look at it and photograph the plants - but it was so cold and my brother wanted to see the new glass house. I was very glad to get into the warmth and thaw out whilst looking at Orchids and other exotics!



Picture # 082 showing a closer view of some of the planting and chip topping

REPORTS ON ALPINE SIG OUTINGS

VISIT TO BERNIE GUYADER'S GARDEN, May 14th

by Valerie Melanson

Bernie kindly opened his Comox garden to a dozen of so of us on a warm, sunny day. He has a very interesting woodland garden, as well as many established alpine troughs, crevice troughs and alpine beds. He also has an impressive bonsai collection and display unit for them. Here are a few of the plants that caught my attention.



Campanula pilosa in alpine trough



Lewisia, Iberis, Gentiana and others



Woodlanders: L to R: Arisema just sprouting, Viola, Pulmonaria

RHODODENDRON LAKE TRIP WITH RAINFOREST TOURS, June 23rd

By June Strandberg

Of the 15 people who signed up as hoping to go on this trip the only person who made it was Louise. Margaret Mosher almost made it but she was not on the original list and nor was I. Four others from the Naturalists were with us, plus Gary and Ronda making a total of eight.

We checked in at the gate and found out there that we had missed Margot. The road is rough, the closer to the lake the rougher it gets! Signs are few and far between, we met only two people - they had tried to go to the lake the weekend before but lost the way and consequently missed the best of the Rhodos. No logs across the road this trip and no elk sightings either but lots of flowers and birds.

Since it was somewhat damp we ate our bag lunch in the bus before we set out - we had to navigate a few muddy patches on our way down the trail. I managed to put my foot in a deep peaty hole in the middle of a little trail and got a very wet and dirty shoe, Christopher washed it off in the lake. We roamed all the trails that we could -

some are pretty overgrown and rough. Lots of interesting trees and the rhodos are everywhere - but I think they only grow on this side of the lake. I did manage to find one tiny shoot that I thought might be a seedling.

We were too late for the *Rhododendron macrophyllum* - the pink one, but *R. groenlandicum* (Labrador Tea - white) was in full bloom and making a great show and we did manage to find a few pink flowers to photograph. *Cornus canadensis* (Bunchberry), *Oxycoccus microcarpus* (Dwarf Bog Cranberry) were seen as well as the *Myrica* gale (Sweet Gale) and lots of *Kalmia polifolia* but we were way too late to see that in flower.

The best part of this trip was the birds, first on the way up, a group of Tanagers, one of which posed very nicely for Gary. Christopher Stephens was with us (those of you who went on the trip to the wetlands by Oceanside School will know him) He spotted and/or heard lots of birds - the highlight being an albino Northern Flicker and his/her normal coloured mate. (Gary thinks it is probably female but not sure) Christopher spotted the albino on the other side of the lake with his naked eyes!!! (I could never see it over there) then he used his glasses and saw the pair of them. They finally flew to our side and sat in a snag so we got a little closer view and I actually saw them! Gary got some photos of these too. Also spotted was a MacGillvray's Warbler - a first for Gary - and Nighthawks flapping away high in the sky.

It was a really wonderful trip and I think Louise enjoyed it as much as I did. I would like to thank Ronda and Gary for going up with a not-very-full-bus!! We would have missed a lot.



Normal & Albino Flickers



Scarlet Tanager

(Both photos by Gary Murdock, mail@rainforestnaturehikes.com)



(Photos by June Strandberg)

VISIT TO OWL & STUMP RARE PLANTS, June 25th

Photos by Valerie Melanson

Grahame Ware is developing Owl & Stump Rare Plant Nursery at Yellowpoint, just south of Nanaimo as a mecca for special woodlanders, shade dwellers and alpines. Here's a peak at his progress:



Alpine Shed in process



Sales Area with lots of choice plants



Greenhouse - borrowing heat from the house



Alpine frames and beds catching the sun



Plunge Beds and Frames



New Alpine Display Bed



L Grahame planting up new shadegarden using his nursery plants, L to R: *Mimulus moschatus* (found in ditch on Lasqueti), *Polygonatum humile* (a subalpine from Hokkaido), *Ophiopogon Haku Ryuko* (a Barry Yinger plant, a mini variegated Mondo grass), *Lonicera crassifolia*, (dwarf and creeping)



In the shade Beds, L to R: *Dactylorhiza macrantha* v. *superba*, view, *Roscoea humeana*

Some plants Grahame highly recommends:



Ophiopogon 'Ryuko Ono' - best dwarf mondo Grass, slow to increase, not invasive, looks Great in middle of winter



Saxifraga fortunei v. *atrorubens*, shade-loving woodland sax in north bed



Disporum cantoniense v. *cantoniense*

L: In early spring, in north bed, R.: showing the characteristic creamy bells in late spring/early summer

ROAD TRIP TO VIRAGS MEETING, JUNE 26

Several Alpine SIG members travelled to Victoria to catch Harvey Wrightman's talk to VIRAGS. As well as visiting a number of nurseries, June, Mike and Dorothy checked out the VIRAGS rock and crevice gardens at Beacon Hill.



VIRAGS Crevice Garden at Beacon Hill



VIRAGS Rock Garden at Beacon Hill Park



Harvey, Irene & Mike at June's garden

On the following few days, Harvey and Irene Wrightman travelled up island and visited Valerie and June's gardens, toured Milner with Mike and June, visited Fraser's Thimble Farm with Mike, and checked out Mike's garden.



Harvey & Irene Wrightman touring Milner with Mike Miller

PLEASE CONTINUE READING WITH PART 2