

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

Issue # 1

October 2011

EDITORIAL:

Here is our inaugural newsletter incorporating a traditional handout and having sections such as Upcoming Group Events, Follow Up Info on Past Events, Other Events of Note, Clip 'N Save Handouts, Sources, Good Reads, Photos.

If you have items or ideas for new sections or articles, or would like to write on a topic, please contact the editor, Valerie Melanson, Melanson.valerie@gmail.com. Submissions would be very welcome. The newsletter will be sent out in the body of an email and as a Word attachment. If you do not have a printer and wish a paper copy mailed to you, please contact Valerie above. Submission deadline is 12th of month, with newsletter to be sent out circa 15th. Frequency - most months except December.

The Handout topic this month is seed starting - it's time to start those alpine seeds that need Outdoor Treatment over the winter.

UPCOMING GROUP EVENTS

Next Meeting & Crevice Garden Workshop

On Monday October 31, 2011, starting at 8 a.m., a crevice garden will be constructed at Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden at Nanoose Place, 2925 Northwest Bay Road, Nanoose. This is planned as a full day participation workshop.

The workshop leader is Paul Spriggs, owner and operator of Spriggs Gardens of Victoria B.C. Paul's expertise with Crevice Gardens comes from training in the Czech Republic with world experts and putting this knowledge and experience into practice, creating many Crevice Gardens

including one at the VIRAGS Garden in Beacon Hill Park and several at his home garden in Victoria where last spring he invited the Alpine and Rock Garden special interest group, which supports Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden at Nanoose Place, to visit.

A core group of the Alpine and Rock Garden special interest group will be active workshop participants. We will start at 8 a.m. and work until the task is complete. We will have access to a room at Nanoose Place for coffee/tea and a place to have our brought lunches--and perhaps get out of the weather.

You are welcome to come and see the work being done. We will have a donation box to help cover some workshop expenses. There will be a door prize too.

There will be rock plants for sale. These are mainly the left over plants from our Oct. 1st sale but if you have anything else you can donate it will be very welcome. The profit from this sale is to go 50% to the crevice garden and 50% to the Alpine SIG.

We will have our regular group meeting starting at 1 p.m. at the workshop. Discussion items - Christmas lunch, programming for next year, etc.

OTHER EVENTS OF NOTE

AGCBC MARCH 2012 MEETING, - March 14th, TBC

David Sellars noted that the Speaker for March 2012 will be Malcolm McGregor, editor of the NARGS Bulletin and author of Saxifrages: A Definitive Guide to the 2000 Species, Hybrids & Cultivars.

FOLLOW UP ON EVENTS

DAVID SELLARS' "JOY OF SAX" AND "FROM RHODODENDRON TO ROCK GARDEN":

David contributes to the NARGS Forum. Here are postings of some of his recent trips with lovely photos:

<http://nargs.org/smf/index.php?topic=714.0> - Maritime Alps, France

<http://nargs.org/smf/index.php?topic=747.0> - Wenatchee Mountains, WA

<http://nargs.org/smf/index.php?topic=761.0> - Olympic Mountains, WA

David's own website:

http://www.mountainflora.ca/Site/Mountainflora_Home.html

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CLIP 'N SAVE HANDOUT

GOOD READS

Recommended by David Sellars:

Saxifrages: A Definitive Guide to the 2000 Species, Hybrids & Cultivars.
(Portland: Timber Press, 2008, 978-0-88192-880-8)

SEED STARTING

WHAT I DO by VALERIE MELANSON

1. Keep a Seed Wish List all year long.
2. Save Seeds & Send in to the AGS and SRGC Seed Exchanges
3. Order Seed (keeping in mind my wish List) from the Seed Exchanges, Commercial Sources (see suggested sources below), etc.
4. Research the germination requirements on the internet and in books. Really good internet source (thanks to June Strandberg) is the Ontario Rock Garden Society SeedEx:
<http://www.onrockgarden.com/guide/seedguide.htm>
5. Using seed starter pots, fill with starter mix - basic is about ½ Dutch Treat / Islands Finest Starter Mix & ½ #2 granite grit. This can be fine tuned for special seeds. Some usual methods:
 - a. Seed scattered on surface of damp mix, lightly mist. This is SL = Surface Sow, needs light.
 - b. Very fine seed needing some cover - sow on surface of damp mix, lightly cover with #2 grit and mist. This is JC = Just Cover. If the seed is a bit bigger, use # 3 grit.
 - c. Bigger seed needing dark to germinate - Some seeds need soaking first. Then dampen mix, dig holes twice width of diameter of seed and cover with mix. Top with some grit to discourage moss buildup. Mist.
6. Park seed trays as per requirements determined by research:
 - a. Set up trays with vented domes for Outdoor Treatment seeds. This is OT. Put a rock on top or use bulldog clips to hold top on (thanks to David Sellars).
 - b. Set up trays with vented domes under grow lights on seed starting heat mats inside or in greenhouse. This is 20C
 - c. Put seed pots needing cold stratification in small trays inside plastic bags in lower part of fridge. Mark with date and how many weeks of stratification are needed. Mark calendar when due out. Take out at proper time and proceed to next part of requirements, e.g. 20C or OT.

- d. Seeds needing gibberellic acid, GA3, treatment to soften their seed coat. I have tried one seed, *Aquilegia discolor*, using a 1 to 3 of vinegar and water for 20 hours and succeeded.

NB: Every pot should have a tag showing Latin Name, treatment abbreviations and date sown. Set up a Propagation Logbook too to record the name, treatment needed, how many seeds and pots sown, date sown, when germination noted, how many seedlings, when potted up, potting up details (e.g. acid or lime, size of grit, leaf mould), etc.

SEED SOURCES (CLUB EXCHANGES):

--AGCBC - Alpine Garden Club of BC - join and get free picks from the seed exchange - <http://www.agc-bc.ca/index.asp>

--AGS - Alpine Garden Society (U.K.) - join and get free picks from their exchange. Send in seed and get extra picks. No charge for postage.

<http://www.alpinegardensociety.net/>

--Fritillaria Group, Alpine Garden Society -

<http://www.fritillaria.org.uk/>

--NARGS - North American Rock Garden Society - join and participate in exchange, small cost.

<http://www.nargs.org/>

--Saxifrage Society, <http://www.saxifraga.org/default.asp>

--SRGC - Scottish Rock Garden Club - join and get free picks from exchange, send in seed and get more picks.

<http://www.srgc.org.uk/>

SEED SOURCES (COMMERCIAL):

AlPlains - <http://www.alplains.com/>

Beaver Creek Greenhouses - <http://www.rockgardenplants.com/>

Chiltern Seeds, Cumbria, UK - <http://www.chilternseeds.co.uk/>

Vojtech Holubec - email him to get on his mailing list

Vojtěch Holubec Bazantní 1217, CZ-165 00 Praha 6, Czech Republic phone: +420 731 587 826 e-mail: holubec@vuvv.cz

IAN YOUNG'S BULB SEED STARTER MIX

USED BY MIKE MILLER AND JUNE STRANDBERG:

June writes: "These seeds/bulbs stay in the pot for 2 years or more, seed starter mix does not hold up long enough. The mix to use is 2 parts grit, 2 parts loam, 1 part leaf mold or peat - do not use coir unless very thoroughly washed (re throwing coconuts into the sea to soften up and the fibre getting salty) I always add 1 part sand as it is hard to get here the sandy loam they get in Scotland."

(Ian Young pens a "Bulblog" on the SRGC website:

<http://www.srgc.org.uk/logs/index.php?log=bulb>

NOVEMBER ISSUE -

MORE SEED STARTING TIPS AND STRATEGIES FROM OTHER MEMBERS.

JANUARY ISSUE - THE NEXT STEP - POTTING UP THE SEEDLINGS, BY VALERIE MELANSON