



"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn
Journal of the
Alpine Gardeners of Central Vancouver Island
<http://alpinegardenersofcvi.wordpress.com/>

Issue # 31

July 2014

FROM THE EDITOR: Again I have been sidetracked into the garden, so once again some reports on activities will be carried over to next issue. So if you don't see it this time, please forgive me and be patient. I appreciate everything you have sent in & will catch up.

NEWS FROM EDINBURGH:

John Mitchell, Alpine Supervisor at the RBG Edinburgh reports: "The tufa house is starting to fill out which is great. The *Dionysia* are doing really well as is the *Primula allionii*. We have not planted up the alpine meadow yet, that will be later this year and the crevice garden is coming along." Please see previous report in issue # 24, part 1 and watch "The Crevice" for further updates. FYI: John is recently returned from a botanical expedition to **Tajikistan** where he saw "lots of *Iris* ... as well as *Tulipa*, *Colchicum* and *Anemone*".

You can read more reports about the expedition and see lots of photos at:

<http://stories.rbge.org.uk/archives/author/jmitchell>

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AGCVI UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS



welcome

Cliff Booker

from Lancashire in the U.K.

To speak on

'The Definitive Dolomites'

Monday, July 28th, 1 – 3 p.m.

(doors open 12:30) at the

Qualicum Beach Civic Centre, 747 Jones Street

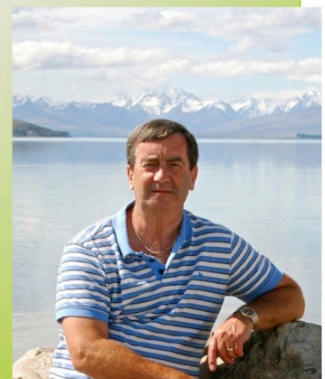
\$5 entry includes plant prize draw and coffee/tea.



Cliff's keynote presentation lasts exactly 73 minutes and features over 900 individual images of the amazing flora, unique wildlife and incredible scenery of these magnificent Italian mountains. Based on the Booker's twelve years of leading wildflower walks for UK travel company: Collett's Mountain Holidays, this beautifully illustrated lecture encompasses an astonishing array of alpine species.

Cliff Booker saw the 'alpine' light on a visit to Liverpool Garden Festival in 1984 when he chanced upon the Alpine Garden Society stand, and his life changed forever. He, and his lovely wife Sue, founded the East Lancashire Group of the AGS and started leading wildflower walks for Collett's. Lecturing soon followed and Cliff has presented his digital 'tour de forces' in Italy, Belgium, New Zealand, USA and Canada and extensively in the UK. With Gold and Farrer Medals for exhibiting, a bit of a reputation for his photographs and a book on alpine under his belt, Cliff continues to spread the alpine word.

Further info? Call Valerie at 594-4423 or email:
Melanson.valerie@gmail.com



Hi folks,

In the June issue of 'The Crevice' we introduced ourselves to your esteemed group and described our forthcoming lecture entitled 'The

Definitive Dolomites' that we will present at the Civic Centre on Monday 28th July at 1pm.

But, who the heck are we and why would we like you to give up your Monday afternoon to watch one of our Keynote digital presentations?

Cliff is the alpine obsessive, Sue is his companion through life.

We garden high on the moors above Whitworth, Lancashire in the UK, where rain and cool winds are the norm' ... when the clouds lift we can enjoy brief spells of sunshine - WHEN the clouds lift!

Cliff became infatuated with alpinism when he encountered an Alpine Garden Society stand at the Liverpool Garden Festival in 1984. He immediately joined the Society, followed shortly by the SRGC, NARGS and any number of other societies. He built up a huge library of alpine books; travelled to the mountains of the world to find special plants in their natural habitats; founded the East Lancashire Group of the AGS in December 1986; began exhibiting his treasures and, over the years, gained Bronze, Silver, Gold and two Farrer Medals.

We have led wildflower walks in the Dolomites for more years than we care to remember and have travelled extensively to the high places of the world to photograph the plants, the landscapes and, to a lesser extent, the unique wildlife of these enchanting places.

Sue has accompanied Cliff on most of these adventures and has proven to be a natural spotter of rare plants in the wild and a very accomplished photographer in her own right.

Since retirement we have been able to accept invitations to lecture from much further afield and we have visited numerous countries to botanize or simply to relax in the mountains that we love.

February 2012 saw the publication of Cliff's first book (co-authored by good friend, David Charlton) entitled; "Mountain Flowers - The Dolomites".

By the time you read this we will have been to the Dolomites for the umpteenth time and will have enjoyed one of the most diverse and stunning floras of any mountain chain ... we hope we can tempt you away from your sun-loungers and barbecues to spend an hour or so in our company on Monday 28th July and enjoy many hundreds of images of these truly spectacular peaks and their equally glorious flowers. You will be very welcome.

Looking forward to meeting you all.
Kind regards,
Cliff and Sue



Gentiana acaulis in the Picos de Europa

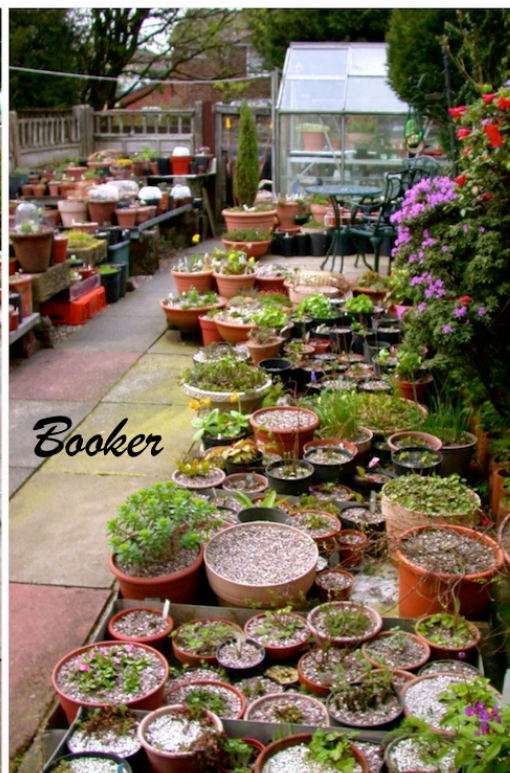


Anemone narcissiflora in Switzerland



Papaver rhaeoticum in The Dolomites

THE 'ALPINE OBSESSIVE' BOOKER BACK GARDEN



REPORT ON AGCVI ACTIVITIES

AGCVI MINI GARDEN TOUR, JUNE 30th

Photos by Kirsten Juergensen

Members visited the unique and inspiring gardens of Dorothy Astridge, Gladys Kinsman, Elaine Bohm and Marion Summerer. Then, at Valerie Melanson's, plants were available by donation to the "Speaker Fund". At the culmination of the tour was Louise Cotterill's lovely garden with leftover plants from the AGCVI Sales on offer, as well as refreshments and a short meeting. Thank you everyone!

DOROTHY ASTRIDGE - Dorothy's garden features many lovely *Clematis*, *Rosa*, *Lilium* and an interesting collection of Alpine troughs and dishes.



GLADYS KINSMAN – It was interesting to see how Gladys' crevice garden and other beds have developed since last year's visit.



ELAINE BOHM - Again it was a treat to see developments in Elaine's unusual garden and to hear about and see her resident swallows.



MARION SUMMERER - This was our first chance to see Marion's garden. The design of her crevice & rock garden were especially interesting.



VALERIE MELANSON - Valerie has been experimenting with mini dish gardens using alpines and has added some new features to the rock garden - bird bath, pail pond, damp bed, berm and St. Fiacre (an Irish patron saint of gardeners) who overlooks shallow water and mud dishes installed for pollinators.



LOUISE COTTERILL - Where does one start? Louise's garden is a plantwoman's paradise, chock full of treasures - both botanical and vintage. It is a treat to visit.



FOLLOW UP TO PLANT PORTRAIT: The Rare *Iris cycloglossa*,
an article by Ian E. Efford in issue # 30

June Strandberg has sent along a photo of the same clump at Kew shown in bud in Ian's article, here in bloom:



June notes:

"It is the first thing Louise and I saw as we walked into the rock garden area at Kew - the very same iris as Ian's but taken on May 23rd 2012 - a very cold spring that year. May 22nd was the first warm day since I arrived in the U.K. on May 1st!"

James Salomons from the RBG Edinburgh got in touch re: this article too:

"I was interested to read about *Iris cycloglossa* and decided to look them up on our database. Turns out we have some collected by P Wendelbo - see

[http://elmer.rbge.org.uk/bgbase/livcol/bgbaselivcol.php?eti=Iris+cycloglossa&countOnly=&cf g=bgbase%2Flivcol%2Fbgbaselivcol.cfg&acc__num= "](http://elmer.rbge.org.uk/bgbase/livcol/bgbaselivcol.php?eti=Iris+cycloglossa&countOnly=&cf g=bgbase%2Flivcol%2Fbgbaselivcol.cfg&acc__num=)

John Mitchell, Alpines Supervisor at RBGE, confirms that these collections are still alive and will send photos next spring.

PLANT PORTRAIT – *Iris bucharica* or Bokhara Iris

By John Moons

(Reprinted by permission of the Mr. Ed Jowett, Editor of the Canadian Iris Society Newsletter, where it was published in Spring 2014 - Volume 58 Issue 2)



Photo by Ian E. Efford – Ian grew these from seed and the photo was taken in his rock garden in Ottawa.

The genus *Iris* is divided into six subgenera and one of these is the subgenus *Scorpiris*. These Irises are also called the Juno Irises. There are about 60 species known up to now. The Juno Irises have a bulb with fleshy roots. The roots look a lot like the roots of daylilies and must be handled carefully to avoid breakage. The plant replaces these roots every year.

Although there are 60 species in the Juno group, there are only a few species that are grown and cultivated on a large scale. The *Iris bucharica* is the best known of these. Most Junos grow in areas where the winters are cold, but have snow cover and the winters are generally dry. The summers are always dry and often hot. In Western Europe and North America these conditions cannot always be easily met. The Junos also need a very well-drained soil with a higher pH. They like full sun.

The *Iris bucharica* was introduced to the bulb trade by the Dutch company of C. G. Jan Tubergen around 1900. In the beginning this Iris was thought to be an *Iris orchioides*. The bulbs look a lot alike, but the *orchioides* has yellow flowers and most have hairs on or near the crest of the falls. Sir Michael Foster determined that it was a separate species and named it *Iris bucharica*. The name *bucharica* comes from the City of Bukhara in Uzbekistan, just north of Afghanistan in Central Asia. Mr. Foster described the plant in 1902 and officially the plant is named *Iris bucharica* Foster. In the wild you will find the bucharicas in the southern part of Central Asia. Quite often the plants are found in very mountainous areas.

The bucharicas have a relatively short growing season. In early spring the bulb sends up shiny green leaves. At this time the food stored in the roots is used up and a new set of roots will grow. The developing leaves are folded in interesting patterns before they are fully opened. The leaves are arranged alternately on a stem that can be 50 cm. tall, but usually it is shorter. The leaves and stem look a lot like a small corn plant. In the USA it is sometimes called the corn leaf iris. Flowers grow out of the axils of the leaves and at the end of the stem. Each leaf axil produces one flower. The flowers are about 5 - 6 cm. across with white standards and yellow falls. The perianth tube is elongated. The petals have long claws. The falls are oblong, rounded, crested and the end of the falls hang down. The standards are much smaller and three lobed. The plants bloom starting at the end of the stem. Because each stem can have up to eight flowers that bloom in sequence you can have blooms for a few weeks. Here in Brantford, Ontario (zone 6) we enjoy the flowers in the second half of May.

Iris bucharica is dormant in the summer. The bulbs like it dry and hot. In the UK the bulbs are often dug up as soon as the leaves have died off in early summer and stored dry until the fall. If the soil is too wet in the summer the bulbs and roots rot easily. In the UK bulb frames are used to grow bucharicas and other Juno and Aril Irises. A bulb frame is a cold frame to use to grow plants that need dry conditions. Of course you can also grow the bucharicas in containers and control the watering. It is important to have a well-drained alkaline soil for bucharicas. The bulbs should be planted at a depth two or three times their height. Spread the storage roots carefully. The bucharicas are hardy in Zones 3 - 8.

The propagation of bucharicas is not so easy. They will develop small bulblets around the base or from the natural division of large bulbs when left alone. If the storage roots are broken off they may make new bulblets if a piece of the basal plate is still attached. Make sure to keep them quite dry, because rot is always a danger. Bucharicas can be grown from seed. It takes 4 years from seeding to blooming. The only company that I have found selling the seeds is Jelitto, a seed house from Germany that specializes in seeds of perennials.

ESWYN GARDEN REPORT - Photos by Elaine Bohm



L: *Polygala x calcarea*, R: *Campanula incurva*



L: *Daphne* "Lawence Crocker", R: Sedums in bloom

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Elaine Bohm



Opuntia polyacantha aka Prickly Pear Cactus in my garden.

WHAT'S NEW IN OUR GARDEN - Margaret & Richard Mann



L: *Delosperma* sp., R: miniature Hostas including *Hosta* 'Blue Mouse Ears', H. 'Lime Lemon', H. 'Masquerade' and H. 'Wee Dare'.



Two pictures of a hypertufa trough with a selection of Sedums and Sempervivums.

LINKS

Here is a link to the **RHS 'Perfect For Pollinators'** Plant List, available to download as a .pdf:
http://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/conservation-and-biodiversity/wildlife/rhs_pollinators_plantlist

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - Marion Summerer



Campanula rainieri

Information from Wikipedia:

Campanula rainieri (Rainer's bellflower, Rainer's harebell) is a species of flowering plant in the genus *Campanula* of the family *Campanulaceae*, native to the Swiss and Italian Alps. It is a low-growing herbaceous perennial growing 5-8 cm (2-3 in) tall by up to 20 cm (8 in) wide, with pale lilac bell-shaped flowers in summer. It is suitable for cultivation in the alpinum or rock garden. It spreads by underground runners.[1]

This plant has gained the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit. [2]

From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campanula_rainieri

WHAT IS THIS PLANT?

In my quest to grow plants found in The Dolomites, I ordered various packets on the Alpine Garden Society seed exchange including *Primula halleri*. Turns out there was a mixup and this is what grew from those seeds.

Can anyone identify it for me? Valerie at Melanson.valerie@gmail.com

June Strandberg suggests it is probably a *Verbascum* hybrid and that looks likely. Any other thoughts?

