

"THE CREVICE"

In memory of Eswyn

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

Issue # 18

Part 2

May 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Page 15 - Table of Contents

Pages 15 - 21 - Follow up on Alpine SIG Events: Alpine SIG Plant Sale, Courtenay trip - Bernie Guyader's Garden & Valley Succulents

Page 21 - 22 - Eswyn Alpine & Rock Garden Plant of the Month - *Rhododendron impeditum*

Page 22 - Useful Links

Pages 23 - 26 - What's New in My Garden - Valerie Melanson, Sue Beatty

Pages 26 - 27 - Plant Portrait - *Primula mistassinica*

Alpine SIG Plant Sale at MARS Spring Fling May 4th 2013

Text by June Strandberg, photos by Kirsten Juergensen

We started on March 25th at my house - potting on, tidying and labeling. The plants stayed at my house and more arrived at intervals until we had a LOT! Valerie came to help price and Lori, Karen and Elaine helped move them to the hall on the day of the sale.



Potting & Tagging Session at June's, March 25th

We had 2 tables booked but somehow ended up with 5!! - all full and still some plants on the floor. We had a steady stream of customers, many of them interested in our group. We sold so many plants but still had a load to bring back to my house. Thank you to Lori, Karen U, Elaine, Sue, Kirsten, Karen B, Linda R and Barb for helping to sell and to Barbara and MARS for all their help. To all of you for bringing plants and to Mike for collecting and counting the money - including everything - we made \$806.75



A large selection of plants on the day



Lori & Karen primp the plants



Barbara Kulla, intrepid MARS & Alpine SIG member

Lori came on Friday morning 10th May and collected some of our surplus plants for QBGC plant sale. We have some of the smaller plants, dianthus, phlox etc left which I would be very happy for you to come and take off my hands and even happier to receive a donation to add to our \$806.75!!

REPORT ON TRIP TO COURTENAY - COMOX, May 6th

Text by June Strandberg, photos by June & Kirsten Juergensen

Barb and I left at 10:40am and managed to miss Mike and Kirsten at the meeting spot but met up with them in Art Knapps - where we loaded up with all kinds of good stuff!

BERNIE GUYADER'S GARDEN

From there we went to Bernie's and his garden was wonderful. Bev met up with us here - so now we are five!! The temperature was in the 20s and the *Erythronium oregonum* in his little alpine meadow, which had been so bright the day before, was sagging. The *Camas* was still to come as was a large patch of, mostly self-seeded, *Tulipa sprengeri*.



Bernie has removed his front hedge and planted Rhododendrons, many of which he has grown from seed (see Bernie's notes) they are mostly creams but one darker pink still in bud.



BERNIE'S NOTES:

"The story on the rhodos is; a friend who was a member of the Rhodo Society, was trying to develop fragrant Rhodos. He was going to select an open pollinated seed pod from R hotei from the rhodo garden which we established in Courtenay. Unfortunately he passed away before he could do this. Six years ago I decided I would do it for him and if there was a decent fragrant one I would name it for him. I'm still evaluating. I've attached two pictures, I hope it's the right one. If not, let me know and I'll send the others."

His troughs are mature with all kinds of mini rhododendrons, conifers and other shrubs, dianthus, gentian, aquilegia, lewisia etc and a wonderfully compact Pink Pussy Toes.



Trough full of mature plants



Penstemon rupicola

Behind the house is a Rhododendron glade in full bloom, making very welcome shade and what a beautiful sight! We wandered through on the little paths, finding all kinds of interesting plants growing around and under the bushes.



Enjoying the glade

We finished off with lemonade on the deck and a good view of the *Comox Glacier* - much cooler!

For those of you who have not been go to Google Map of 1970 6th St, Courtenay BC' - enlarge to street view and turn till you see a house with troughs - there you will see Bernie in his garden!!

Next we tried the **Plant Collector Nursery** but were disappointed to find a large CLOSED sign. We got out of our vehicles and hung over the gate hoping someone might take pity on us - but no luck!

So on to **Anderton Road Nursery** - where they really know how to display their wares. Lots more stuff in the trunk!

As we had a little time before 6pm we made a quick trip to Tim Horton's in Comox.

Then on to our appointment at VALLEY SUCCULENTS.



LtoR: June, Mike, Jamey Lauinger

We met Jamey Lauinger and all his wonderful plants. He has a very large greenhouse full of tender succulents of all kinds, smooth or spiny, thin, fat, large or small, some shaped like tiny trees, some fuzzy and some with beautiful flowers. You need to look hard as there are so many different things - I was most tempted but have nowhere to keep them except a window sill and as I am so good at killing house plants I decided to stay with the hardy! There is a greenhouse of hardy succulents and another large selection outside.



I found plenty of *Sempervivum*, *Jovibarba*, *Lewisia*, *Delosperma*, *Sedum*, *Saxifraga*, etc to load on my tray. We left there with another big haul!

Jamey is open Friday afternoons 12.00-5.00, Saturdays 1.00-5.00 and Sundays 10.00 - 4.00. otherwise evenings by appointment. - It is probably best to email or phone if you

are going to make a special trip up there. He is also at Comox Valley Saturday Farmers' Market 9.00-12.00. This is an incredible place and well worth a visit - you might even find the Plant Collector Nursery open too! Website www.valleysucculents.ca email info@valleysucculents.ca Phone 250-465-1338

PLANT OF THE MONTH IN ESWYN'S ALPINE & ROCK GARDEN

Text and photo by Karen Unruh



Rhododendron impeditum

This dwarf alpine species rhododendron was selected by Barbara Kulla for Eswyn's Alpine & Rock Garden. Barbara planted it in the Crevice Garden huddled beside some taller rocks so that it would get some shade for part of the day. And it does. It has just come into bloom this month and the dwarf 10 cm. high and 18 cm spread shrub is covered with fine lilac coloured blossoms.

The American Rhododendron Society web site describes this rhododendron as an early midseason bloomer that may grow to 1 foot [30 cm.] in 10 years. The broadly funnel shaped blossoms can range from purple, through the blue and rose lavenders to rarely white. The leaves are oblong to 5/8 inch [3/4 cm]. The plant originates in China.

A potted bonsai 35 year old *Rhododendron impeditum* was displayed at the MARS Spring Fling. It was about 50 cm. high and 70 cm. wide. The blooms were the same colour as the blooms on the plant in Eswyn's Alpine & Rock garden.

The plant description in "Greer's Guidebook to Available Rhododendrons" is followed by some growing suggestions as quoted here. "This species is one of the best, most versatile of available dwarfs, considered to be ideal for rock gardens or bonsai, and making a distinctive bed edging as well. It is extremely effective planted en masse leaving 15" between plants. These will eventually grow together to make a dense ground cover of great beauty and hardiness, good to look at any time of the year, but especially lovely during the spring blooming cycle, when it becomes a virtual 'blanket of blue'." Our one shrub in the rock garden is beautiful, so it is easy to imagine the beauty of this garden edging.

USEFUL LINKS

Cliff & Sue Booker recently visited the Peloponnese and Cliff posted a lovely photo of *Linum pubescens* to Alpine-L:

<http://botu07.bio.uu.nl/temperate/?gal=AlpenPix&id=3575> Cliff wrote: 'It really is a glorious little flower, but a complete thug in it's natural habitat on the coastal plains and up into the mountains of the Peloponnese. An annual that has spread into every possible location, I fear it would take over completely in the cosseted confines of a garden.'

Alpine-L website links:

<http://www.thealpinegarden.com/alpine-l.htm>

and the picture gallery is at:

<http://www.thealpinegarden.com/ALPG2.htm>

and their archives at:

<http://mailman.science.uu.nl/pipermail/alpine-l/>

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/plantsearch.aspx> - Plants for a Future has an extensive database of plants that are edible or medicinal. For the plants covered (many we would never think are edible or ...) they include extensive information on propagation. (thanks to Sue Beatty)

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - VALERIE MELANSON

It's that time of the spring when the columbines to come to the fore:



Aquilegia scopulorum - Utah Columbine



Aquilegia discolor



Aquilegia saximontana



Aquilegia Formosa



Aquilegia 'Summer Star' fr. *A. desertorum*

Aquilegia discolor - grown from SRGC 2010 seed # 406, first flower Apr-May 2013, kept in part sun position.

Aquilegia formosa - plant purchased at Cannor in 2010, flowers vigorously every year, mostly sun position. Height to about 18 inches in my rocky soil.

Aquilegia saximontana - grown from AGS 2010 seed # 1512, flowered for first time in 2012, kept in part sun position. Height about 9 inches.

Aquilegia scopulorum - grown from AGS 2010 seed # 1514, started Dec 28, 2010, flowered for first time in 2012, kept in dry sunny position, very dwarf.

Aquilegia* 'Summer Star' fr. *A. desertorum - plant purchased at Owl & Stump in March 2012, one flower 2012, numerous flowers coming now. Planted in full sun in top of crevice garden. Height about 18 inches.

WHAT'S NEW IN MY GARDEN - SUE BEATTY



Left: A *Primula veris* which I got from an alpine plant sale. It sure brightens up a dark spot and makes me smile.



Right: *Asarum caudatum* wild ginger totally fascinates me - what an incredible flower it has. I got it last year at a native plant sale after a walk with Jo Graham and Michaela Schmidt.



Left: *Arisarum proboscideum* a member of the Jack in the Pulpit family I also got last year at the MARS plant sale. I like how in early spring that little tail peeks up and says I'm here!!!

Right: I swore I wasn't buying any more tulips - deer eat them and I don't like fussing with them. Then Graham Ware offered bulbs last fall. I saw a couple that I fell in love with and I wasn't disappointed with this beautiful variegated delight. I was entranced when the leaves peaked out green and creamy and slightly red on the outside. Then the flowers came - each had three. The flowers have now gone but the foliage is still looking

gorgeous and adding interest. I'm sure I'll like the other tulip when it shows up - it's a late double called 'Ramona'.

PLANT PORTRAIT - *Primula mistassinica*

Text and photos by Valerie Melanson



Grown from AGCBC 2011 Seed # 353 surface sown on # 2 grit, Outdoor treatment, Jan 18, 2011. First blooms in April 2013. On the right, one of the resulting plants, being herbaceous, died back for the winter and regrew for 2013.

Like so many primroses, the Mistassini is liberally dusted with white or yellow 'farina' on leaves, stems and flowers.



Another plant started in 2012 and kept sunk in the rock garden in a part shade location shows great leaf grow and lots of farina. It has also had a liberal seed set this year.



Primulas of Europe and America notes this primrose was probably the first one named in North America when it was collected by Michaux in 1792 near Lake Mistassini, Quebec. Distribution is broad across Canada - from along the St. Lawrence River, around the Great Lakes to the west through the prairies up into the NWT - and NE USA. It grows in wet turfy areas, moist cliffs, gritty/marshy lake shores, mostly in chalky/limey regions, part shade or sun. As well as reproduction by seed it also can form offsets by budding from the roots. The stem can reach from 3 to 21 cm tall. An umbel of 1 to 10 blossoms tops the stem. Blossoms ranges from pale pink, lilac, bluish purple or rarely white with a yellow or orange eye and yellow tube.

References:

Minnesota Wildflowers website: www.minnesotawildflowers.info

Primulas of Europe and America by G. F. Smith, B. Burrow and D. B. Lowe (Woking, Surrey: Alpine Garden Society, 1984), ISBN 0-900048-41-7, pp. 104-105.