

BULLETIN

of the

AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

Vol. 7

July - August, 1949

No. 4

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Dorothy Ebel Hansell, Editor

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A BOTANICAL TRIP TO THE GASPE PENINSULA

EDITH C. LAWTON, PLAINFIELD, N. J.

IN the interior of the Gaspé Peninsula of the Province of Quebec lie the Shick-shock Mountains. The two highest of these, separated by the deep valley of the Ste. Anne River, are Table Top Mountain (Mont Jacques Cartier) of granitic formation and Mont Albert, mostly serpentine, each of about 4,000 feet elevation. They are celebrated for their special arctic alpine flora, of which many species are endemic.

Our party started from Ste. Anne-des-Monts, on the north side of the Gaspé, and after an hour's drive we left the cars and began the steep ascent of Mont Albert. For about 3,000 feet of the climb, the trail passes through the typical primeval Spruce-Fir forest of the north. On the lower levels are mats of *Epigaea repens*, *Chiogenes hispidula*, *Linnaea borealis* var. *americana*, *Moneses uniflora*, etc. The moss layer is extremely thick. There were many varieties of fungus and one member of the group, whose speciality they are, started filling a basket with specimens. I wondered if he was going to carry them all the way to the top. He did, for I saw him near the summit, still struggling with his basket.

The path soon became much steeper and we gaspingly dragged ourselves up. At the timberline is the camp site of the early botanical exploration expedition of Fernald and Weatherby, where they with other botanists spent the season collecting and studying. There we ate the dry sandwiches provided by the inn in Ste. Anne-des-Monts, then started the final pull to the summit which is not a "peak" but a rolling tableland of some three and a half by two and a half miles, bare of trees and with steep cirque walls and gorges dropping to the deep v-shaped valleys far below.

It is in this tundra that many of the most interesting alpiners grow. It harbors several species not found elsewhere in eastern North America. Dense mats of the Aleutian Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum* var. *aleuticum*) covered the ground, exposed to all the sun and wind of that bleak area. At the head of Devil's Gulch, it was a real thrill to come upon two other far western ferns, *Cheilanthes siliquosa*, formerly *Pellaea densa*, and *Polystichum mohrioides* var. *scopulinum*. Under foot everywhere were typical alpiners such as *Silene acaulis* var. *exscapa*, *Arenaria marcescens* (eastern Quebec-Newfoundland endemic), *Diapensia lapponica*, *Phyllodoce coerulea*, *Loiseleuria procumbens*, *Armeria labradorica* var. *submutica*, *Habenaria hyperborea*, *Antennaria gaspensis*, *Asplenium viride*, *Castilleja septentrionalis*, *Rhododendron lapponicum* and countless other species.

An interest of a different sort was provided by the sight of several caribou grazing at a distance of, perhaps, half a mile.

Finally, in the late afternoon, the various members of the expedition, dispersed over the extensive tableland, tore themselves regretfully from their botanizing and started on the long descent which, as is often the case, was as difficult as the ascent. We reached Ste. Anne-des-Monts tired but feeling well repaid for an unforgettable experience.

Other sections of the Gaspé also have much to attract the plant lover. Le Bic has jagged headlands reaching out into the St. Lawrence. Great mats of *Saxifraga aizoon* hung along the tops of the cliffs and on Cap Enrage was *Saxifraga caespitosa*. Here we nearly got into trouble. We had reached the point of the headland by walking along the sandy beach at its base. We did not realize that when the tide came in, the beach would be covered to the foot of the cliffs. The Cape is covered with primeval forest with no path of any kind through it. It was heart-breaking work, forcing our way to the mainland again.

The region around Perce, at the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, has a flora of great interest. On the ledges of Mont Sainte Anne and at the crevice are *Dryas integrifolia*, *Erigeron compositus*, various Drabas, *Antennaria gaspensis*, *Saxifraga aizoon* and many other alpiners, while at the "Grotto" *Saxifraga aizoides* draped its orange-yellow flowers from the damp cliffs.

Bonaventure Island and its famous bird sanctuary are usually seen by most tourists from a small boat which goes close beneath the sheer cliffs of the sanctuary. There, literally thousands of gannets, cormorants, puffins, black guillemots and other sea birds nest in peace. Not many people land on the island, and it is well worth a visit. A tiny cluster of houses belongs to fisherfolk who keep a few cows and some sheep. They spin and weave the wool into homespun material to be sold in Perce.

There are no roads on the island but a rough path crosses it to the top of the sanctuary cliffs. We made our way around the island by a series of cow paths which follow the tops of the cliffs through dense woods. In little open glades leading down to the sea were *Primula laurentiana* (American phase of *P. farinosa*), *Pinguicula vulgaris* and *Parnassia parviflora*, a tiny edition of the commoner Grass of Parnassus.

From Perce, the road follows the south shore of the peninsula, crossing several rivers that have their origin in the Shickshock Mountains of the interior and empty into the Baie-des-Chaleurs. We found the Bonaventure River especially worth while. There were masses of *Primula mistassinica*, which looks like a tiny *P. farinosa* but is not "mealy".

A little gravelly island in the river, a few miles from its mouth, was brilliant with the flowers of *Parnassia glauca*, *Potentilla fruticosa*, *Campanula rotundifolia*, *Aster gaspensis* (endemic) and the heavenly blue of *Lobelia kalmii*.

The Baie-des-Chaleurs region has an abundance of weeds of European origin, established for a long time. This is said to be due to the landing of French fishermen. Among them may be mentioned *Centaurea nigra*, *Lathyrus latifolius* and *Scabiosa arvensis*. The little *Cotula coronopifolia* of the wet places comes, however, from Africa.

ARENARIA LARICIFOLIA

As the name implies, the foliage of this plant resembles that of the Larch. *Arenaria laricifolia* sends out short trailing stems from a central mound of foliage and in midsummer, when covered with the Gypsophila-like white flowers, makes a pretty addition to the scree and crevices of the rock garden. Its culture is easy in gritty soil in full sun. When it likes its surroundings, this *Arenaria* will send in a restrained fashion and so propagate itself. Clare W. Regan, Butte, Mont.

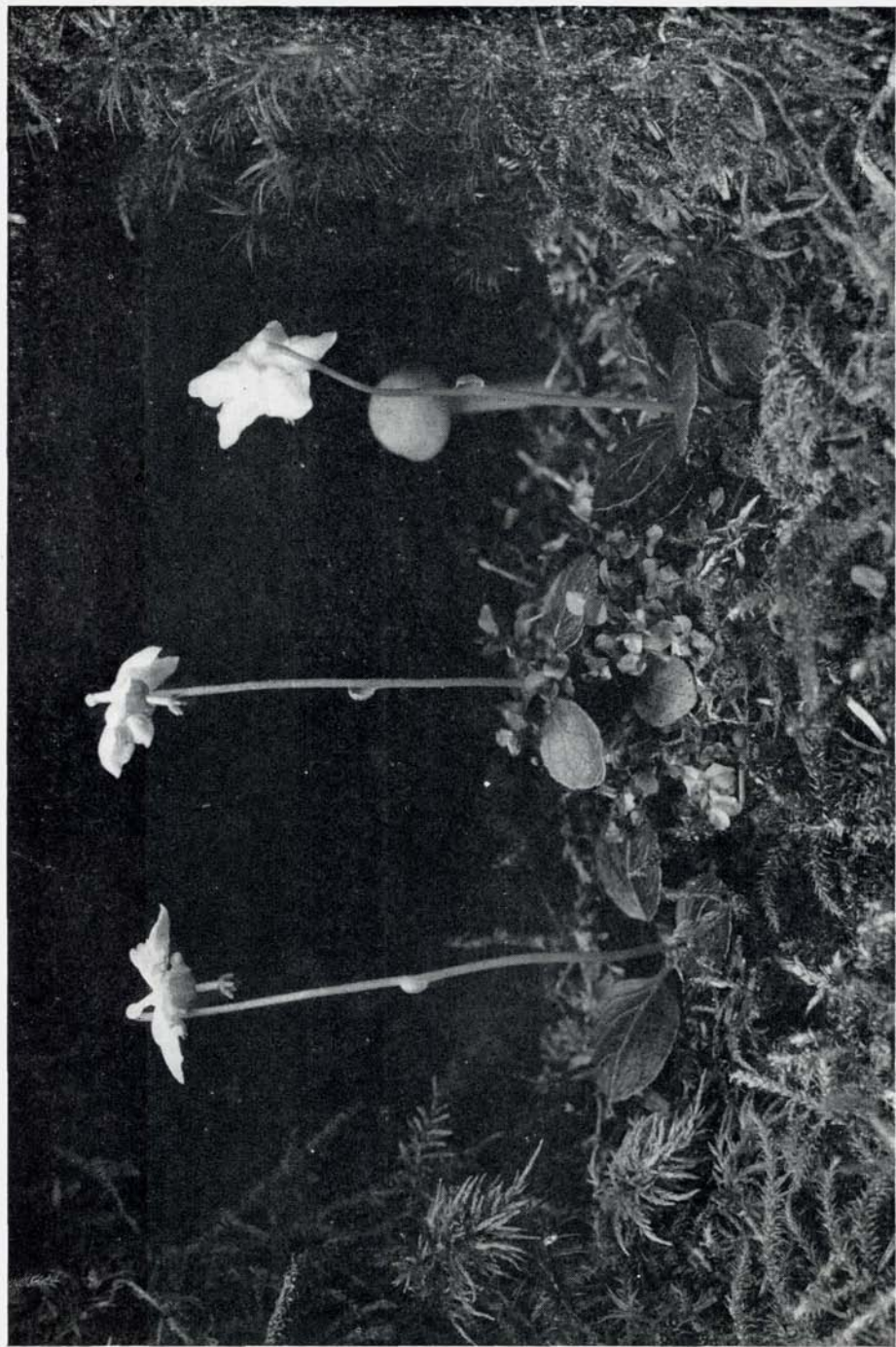


Photo by Marcine Williams

Moneses uniflora

CLAIRE NORTON'S NOTEBOOK

EVERY rock garden to appear natural, to have the look of belonging where it is, requires a background. Or to put it another way, a vital necessity is a backdrop against which flowering plants can stage their tableaux of spring, summer and fall, and against which the structural beauty of the rock garden will show to advantage during the winter.

Sempervivum fauconnettii is one of the neatest, best behaved plants we have grown in our garden. The small clump at the top of the dry wall was charming this season with its bloom stalk gracefully drooping under the weight of its rosy, cactus-like blooms, making an unusual picture. The larger clump in the rock garden has outgrown its allotted space and must be divided into numerous new families of soft green hens with chicks of all sizes clustering about their wings.

Last year, I could not make up my mind whether I liked the Yellow Wonder Iceland Poppy, or *Papaver amurense*, as some catalogs list it. This year, I know I definitely do. It is a lovely thing, the blossoms not as large with us as described but swaying gracefully on their tall slender stems and having a distinctive fragrance. I do not remember reading or hearing about the latter characteristic, but the odor is sweet and pleasant.

Polypodium hesperium, the Western Polypody, makes an interesting little fern for the shaded rock wall. Its fronds leave the impression that they are artificial and have been cut out of crepe paper.

If some one should come along - may such a disaster never happen - and say: "Choose one *Viola* from among all you have, the rest I am taking", then I believe it would be *V. bosniaca* to which I would hold. It hugs the ground and has such dancing rosy faces - a lovely deep tone of rose with just the right touch of creamy white in its heart when first open.

The Tom Thumb "Snaps" are suited to planting in the rock garden. These little chaps grow but six to eight inches tall and come in beautiful colors. I especially like the white one which is listed as "Snowcap".

Amorpha canescens, the Lead-Plant, and *A. nana*, Dwarf Indigo, are excellent little shrubs for the rock garden. Both grow about twenty inches tall. The former has silvery foliage and sprays of small violet-blue flowers; the latter bears garnet flowers, followed by equally attractive brown seed pods, setting off its dark green, fern-like foliage.

If ever there were a more beautiful plant for the wall or rock garden than *Euonymus kewensis*, I have yet to see it. The spreading, nearly prostrate branches with their small, dainty, evergreen leaves are so appealing when draped over reddish-brown, lichen-covered stones.

Sedum lydium is a valuable carpeting plant with rich green foliage which flushes to crimson.

Nepeta mussini is a plant of dwarf, compact habit, producing masses of lavender blooms early in the spring and continuing intermittently during the summer and fall. Souvenir Andre Caudron is a still better *Nepeta*.

Erinus alpinus can be depended upon to bloom all summer in sun or light shade.

Carpathian Harebell, *Campanula carpatica*, holds its clear blue flowers erectly on stems averaging about eight inches in height and gives a long and satisfactory season of bloom. Its white variety, *alba*, is even lovelier among the rocks.

Plants are as temperamental about their diets as are people, and their needs must be studied.

Liboschitzianus is a horrible name to attach to any plant, but the *Dianthus* bearing it is an exquisite white-flowered species blooming during July. It does grow quite tall and is, perhaps, a bit too tall for the small rock garden, but a possibility for the large one.

The neighbors in our mountain village of summer days think we are crazy building a rock garden. One of them told us she spent her life carrying rocks out of her garden plot and could not conceive of carrying them back to build a rock garden !

Claire Norton, Laporte, Colorado

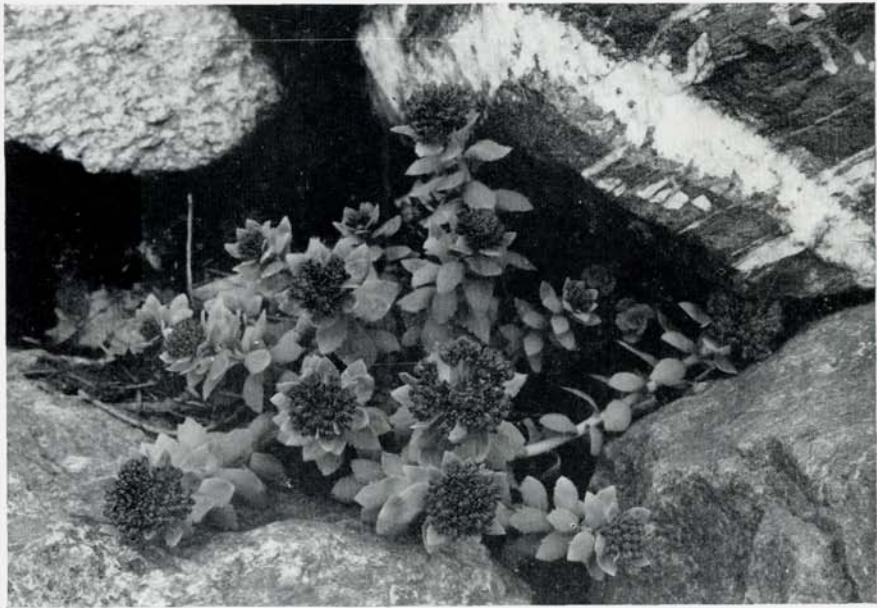


Photo by Marcine Williams

Kings Crown (*Sedum integrifolium*)

The darkest-hued alpine flower of western North America is this Stonecrop, its petals and carpels being dark red-purple. It is unusual, too, in thriving in noister situations than most succulents. There are many different opinions as to its correct technical name; some consider it only a subspecies of the circumboreal *Sedum rosea* (often misspelled *roseum*, but in this case the Rules of Nomenclature forbid having the genus and species names rhyme!). On the other hand, believers in small genera may call it *Rhodiola integrifolia*, and still other synonyms are more or less widely used. E.T.W.

NEW SHRUBBY PENSTEMONS

DR. C. R. WORTH, GROTON, NEW YORK

SINCE the appearance of the Penstemon number of this Bulletin, a great many species have been introduced into cultivation, largely through the exploration of Amel Priest and the writer. These novelties include dwarfs and giants, easy and difficult, from deserts and high mountains, in yellow, pink and red as well as the more familiar blue and purplish shades. In a broad sense, these are all rock plants, yet many are too tall for anything less spacious than the rock garden at the New York Botanical Garden.

It is, of course, the types truly appropriate to even the smallest rock garden which appeal to me. A number of shrubby ones from the northwest especially *P. rupicola*, have long been in cultivation but they suffer much from the eastern climate. The glorious blues of such rosetted species as *P. angustifolius* and *P. nitidus* (of which the sub-species *P. polyphyllus* is the one in general cultivation) are so impermanent as to discourage all but the most determined gardeners.

With great pleasure then, I can report that a race of small shrubby species singularly appropriate to the most exclusive rock garden is proving, for the most part, remarkably tolerant of eastern conditions and is gradually becoming available to the general public.

P. crandallii has been in cultivation for some time, but while it grows well enough in most gardens, it is painfully shy-flowering. This is not the case in the wild, to judge from the one time that I collected it, and, moreover, it was upright there, not trailing as it grows here. Can it be, Mrs. Marriage, that the forms now grown in gardens are inferior?

P. abietinus is so close to *P. crandallii* that the distinction is largely geographic, for the rarer species is confined to a single valley in Utah. In the garden, however, it is everything that *P. crandallii* is not - upright to about six inches, forming a tiny Heath-like mass, set in early summer with a profusion of small flowers of the clearest light blue. It grows fully as easily as *P. crandallii*, is long-lived, and of vigor enough to recuperate from extremely severe winters. But it is sensitive to winter wind and should be sheltered from prevailing winds by a large rock.

P. xylus, from eastern Utah, Keck regards as pure *P. crandallii*, but it is completely distinct from any of the latter that I have ever seen in leaf and general appearance, with broader, blunter leaves. In the wild, it makes mats several feet across set with very deep blue flowers. It seems fully at home in the garden.

P. caespitosus is also an aggregate of mat-forming plants for the most part. One of these obtained from Mayfair Nurseries has me baffled, for while obviously the true species, it is different in habit and general appearance from any of the wild ones, looser, more trailing, but easy in the garden. *P. caespitosus perbrevis* is one of the smallest of all Penstemons, barely half an inch, but making a large mat. The relatively large flowers, borne singly flat on the carpet, are of very deep blue. I must confess that this sub-species is not too easy, but at last is taking hold and increasing both in the sand bed - driest part - and between two rocks on the top of a mound. *P. c. desertipicti*, from regions south of the Grand Canyon where it grows in open spaces among Pines, is a slightly taller mat former, to three inches. In the wild, some plants had glaucous blue foliage, others green, but this difference seems to have disappeared in the garden, where the leaves turn reddish brown in fall. This sub-species still lives with me, but without enthusiasm. *P. c. suffruticosus* (*P. suffrutescens* of some writers, but this name also has been misapplied to *P. crandallii*) is a high mountain plant, from very limy slopes near timberline. It forms a tiny erect shrub, perhaps six inches across and half as

high, with blue-purple flowers, but so far has refused to have anything to do with me.

P. linarioides also forms a variable aggregate, of which one of the best, *P. coloradoensis*, is available commercially and prospers in both midwest and east. It is likewise a rather compact small shrub, up to six inches in height, with quite long (relatively) and narrow silvery leaves, beautiful even when not covered with the small lavender flowers. Even more delightful is *P. l. compactifolius*, unfortunately not yet in cultivation. It is common around Flagstaff, Arizona, and I should be indebted to anyone who would pick up a plant for me; it is common along the road near the cliff dwelling at Oak Creek Canyon. Visitors to the Grand Canyon may observe yet another form of this species, a singularly ugly one, along the road east of the village.

The prize of the shrubby group has been left till the last; if it flowers freely in cultivation (it has not yet done so), its ease of culture and beauty will make it one of the most valuable of all rock plants. This treasure is *P. pinifolius*, entirely new to cultivation. It makes very small woody mats (I cannot recall having seen any as much as a foot across) rather sparingly set with leaves a half inch long and negligible in width - so far a more woody and emaciated *P. abietinus*. But stems of six to nine inches bear a number of flowers more than an inch long, flaring at the throat, with very long lips. And the color! Intense scarlet with yellow throat, unrivalled in vividness among the miniatures except by *P. rupicola*. *P. pinifolius* grows in rocky places at moderate elevations in mountains near the Mexican border and should, obviously, be both difficult and tender. Yet it came through the unusually trying winter and spring of 1947-48 in a wide variety of positions in the rock garden, in sand bed, in alpine house and basement window, without damage, and is growing with great freedom for so conservative and localized a plant. This gem is not yet generally available, but a few gardeners in widely separated localities have reported success with it.

One last species must be mentioned - as a warning. *P. microphyllus*, with tiny leaves and yellow flowers, has more than once been recommended for the rock garden. Maybe so, if your garden is designed for giant cacti and succulents, for *P. microphyllus* is from low desert regions, is almost certainly tender and grows fully five feet high and as much across!

Regarding the culture of these tiny shrubs, not too much is known at present other than that most of them are amenable to sunny locations in ordinary rock garden soil. Some grow naturally on lime formations, but seem indifferent to its absence from the garden. Here they have been tried in a variety of positions and seem to be content - other than the *P. caespitosus* forms - in all; the lower part of the semi-scrub, the sand bed (with a modicum of shade), at the top of a northeast-facing cliff when an enormous *Potentilla fruticosa* gives a bit of afternoon shade. They have flourished most on the south side of the highest mound in the rock garden, where low flat rocks offer a little shelter, without real shade, and where excess moisture never lingers, yet the soil does not grow entirely dry. I cannot predict uniform success everywhere with these miniatures, but they are certainly, most of them, among the most amenable of the genus.

PENSTEMON GRACILIS

CLAUDE W. BARR, SMITHWICK, SOUTH DAKOTA

PENSTEMON *gracilis*, type of an important group which includes many kinds more impressive, carries its role with modesty, yet with undeniable charm and no slight grace - unless, indeed, the observer to be aware of charm must see red or be immersed in blue and lifts a brow at grace in a flower.

P. gracilis has a quiet beauty in shadow or bright sun. Even when one notes its presence all about him, it is as a group of individuals, never as a broadside. Its stature and size and color make it so. Averaging a foot in height, and slender, the blossoms small as compared to many, its color is a light amethyst with or without deeper markings and with a certain happy glow in sunlight. The florets are neat in form and ample in contour and well placed in goodly company. The plant is effectively seen when its own leaves of medium deep green, lanceolate and slightly toothed, make a part of the dark background for the clustered spikes of bloom. Blooming time is June and early July.

Native to the Plains and eastern borders of the Rockies, *P. gracilis*' habit is marked by a mellowness of soil, soft loams however rocky, sometimes sandy humus, with moisture for the growing season. It has the ability to withstand intense drought when favored by shade, up to one half, so its liking for a degree of mildness makes it readily accommodated in gardens which are not heavily watered.

ERIGERON AUREUS

ELSE M. FRYE, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

ON the high peaks of the Cascades, from British Columbia through Washington, we find *Erigeron aureus*. I have never seen it really plentiful except in a wide swale on Mt. Rainier. There it had waged a very successful battle against other comers so that it formed more or less of a carpet. The late receding snow, which becomes very dirty, had left its mark on the bronzy gold of the flowers.

In a garden, where *Erigeron aureus* came up through clean scree, I noticed the flowers were bright gold and showed a very attractive sun-highlighted glint.

A good-sized plant will be from three to five inches across, with stems no taller than two inches.



Erigeron aureus

Photo By Paul L. Miller

REGELIO-CYCLUS IRIS

DR. HELEN C. SCORGIE, HARVARD, MASSACHUSETTS

IN May, when everywhere in the rock garden plants are jostling one another in their haste to bloom, cascading masses of bright color cover the ground at the expense of individual plant and flower outline. Most of the plants lie flat, spreading or trailing and conforming to the outline of the ground beneath. At this season, even in plants of vertical habit, like the shrubby Alyssums, the numerous small flowers do not stand out singly but are molten into one flowing whole. These small shrubs do, to be sure, break the monotony of the ground-hugging stretches of rock plants, giving needed variations in height. But there is need also of flowers that stand out individually as focal points of interest above the gay carpets.

In my sunny rock garden, sloping as it does rather sharply to the south, the regelio-cyclus Irises are particularly happy in this role, whereas many plants that flourish in this spot in spring and early summer find the hot baking of the soil in the August drought not to their liking. After flowering, prolonged exposure in the dry earth to the glare of the midsummer sun ripens and hardens the rhizomes so that they are able to withstand the succeeding winter cold.

The fan-shaped tuft of basal leaves is of more slender growth than in the garden Iris with none of the stockiness of the familiar dwarf Iris. This delicacy of growth compensates for the ten inches to which the lithe stems of some of the hybrids attain. Others among them, especially those of *Iris paradoxa* relationship, are shorter.

Then, too, their color gives relief from the brilliancy of Alyssum, Iberis and Phlox. The sober hues both harmonize and contrast with the resplendence of the low mounds about them that outline sharply the rich fullness of the shapely flowers. But the color of these Irises, while subdued, is not dull but of warm reds, blues and paler shades that are spoken of as gray but which have warm undertones. Over the basic coloring are intricate patterns of veining and blotches, bringing to mind the tapestries of the flowers' ancestral home.

These hybrids are of easier culture than the parents, the onocyclus and regelis Iris, and more permanent in northern gardens. They like a soil that is very gritty, containing plaster rubble and much humus and at all times should have the sharpest drainage. They rarely require watering as during their brief period of active growth in the spring, abundant rains are seldom lacking to satisfy their needs. When the plants begin to go dormant, they should be mulched with compost, not worked into the ground but left on the surface where the dark color of the humus increases the absorption of the sun's rays during the baking period necessary for the plants' well-being. Later, the humus will be washed in by snow and rain to give the activated roots additional nutriment. A little lime may be mixed with the compost if the soil is naturally very acid, but in ordinary circum-neutral soil, the slowly dissolved lime rubble added to the soil at planting time is sufficient.

During the summer months of dormancy, the baking must be as hot and prolonged as possible. In damp climates, these Irises are said to require an annual lifting during the summer. But here in New England, this is not necessary nor, I think, desirable. The space they occupy is not great and the soft brown mulch covering the bare spots is not unattractive. On my parched southern slope, where only the toughest deep-rooted plants can survive the drought of the dog-days, these Irises get a baking such as their ancestors get on their native hills. Occasional (usually here very occasional) showers do no harm to the sleeping rhizomes as

the water seeps rapidly down to lower depths and the surface dries off quickly.

Growth may begin again with the return of wet weather in the autumn. It is, however, slight and has not been injured by the succeeding cold weather. During the winter, they receive the same covering of Pine boughs as the rest of the slope, made necessary by the frequent midwinter thaws.

The only other care they ask is to have their space kept free from inroads by their neighbors, most of whom are by nature aggressive. Those plants which form roots as they go should be kept from their immediate vicinity, particularly those with running underground roots. The surface invaders can easily be removed with shears. Except for esthetic reasons, the flower stalks do not need removing as the plants appear to be sterile.

THE VARIEGATED LADY FERN

HAROLD EPSTEIN, LARCHMONT, NEW YORK

AN unusual fern which often evokes comment in my garden is the variegated Lady Fern, *Athyrium goeringianum* var. *pictum*. This is a native of Japan, perfectly hardy and of easy culture in varying soils and sites. Its drooping fronds are from twelve to eighteen inches long and about four inches broad. In the spring, the new fronds are a rich purple and as they mature, this color fades into tones of purplish green and gray, while the stipes retain the purplish color. These silvery grays and purples will vary in depth of color, dependent upon the degree of shade in which they are planted. It is very effective in a partially shaded rockery where its unique coloring may be most appreciated.

It often distributes its spores in the garden to produce many young plants, which will vary considerably in their coloring. The Lady Fern may also be propagated by division of its roots in either spring or fall.

The typical form of this species, *Athyrium goeringianum*, has fronds of a uniform green color, without any evidence of the purples and grays in the variegated form.

Occasionally sporelings, from the variegated form, appear and seem to have reverted to the type species.

OENOTHERA FLAVA

DR. C. R. WORTH, GROTON, NEW YORK

LAST winter, I sent to the Seed Exchange a packet of an unnamed *Oenothera* species which has since been determined as *Oenothera flava* (A. Nels.) Munz, by an authority on the genus, Dr. Philip Munz.

This species makes a small tuft of basal leaves, so greatly resembling those of the Dandelion that it has at times been weeded out as that pest, and then produces through early summer evenings a profusion of soft yellow flowers a couple of inches across, borne stemless several inches above the rosette. While a true perennial, *Oe. flava* is usually short-lived in the garden, but it self-sows sufficiently to maintain and increase itself a little. It seems to be completely indifferent to soil conditions, for it grows in semi-scrub, on a north slope of ordinary soil, and is even seeding itself into the hard and poorly drained path. Sun, of course, is called for as with all the genus.

I met and collected *Oenothera flava* in 1940, beside melting snowbanks on the high mountains east of Ephraim, Utah. It was just coming into bloom at that time, but old capsules buried in soil and still clinging to the plant gave viable seed. It flowered first in 1942 in my garden and then apparently disappeared. However, when I was again able to care for the garden in 1946, I found a few volunteer plants which by careful nursing have increased to a sizeable colony, apparently established for the duration of the garden.

This species, with the exception of a single plant of gorgeous *Oe. caespitosa*, is the only one of the many I have seen which I regard as worthy of a position in the rock garden, barring superlative and as yet ungrowable *Oe. caespitosa crinita*.

ANNUAL REPORTS

More than sixty members and friends were present when Mr. Leonard J. Buck, vice president, in the absence of the president, opened the sixteenth annual meeting of the American Rock Garden Society on May 21, 1949. The meeting was held on the terrace overlooking a rolling expanse of lawn surrounded by trees and shrubs, certainly a very beautiful setting for such an occasion. Mr. Buck extended a word of welcome and then called upon the secretary to present the following reports.

At the conclusion of the business session, the party spent several hours viewing the magnificent rock garden and the wealth of plant material - in fact, everyone seemed most reluctant to depart.

Mr. and Mrs. Buck's garden and Dr. and Mrs. Sherer's garden in West Orange, which was visited in the morning, have previously been pictured and described in THE BULLETIN.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

IT is with extreme regret that I am unable to attend this annual meeting. It is the only May meeting that I have not attended since the inception of my association with the American Rock Garden Society. But I assure you that my resolution of a few years ago, of not permitting my business to interfere with my horticultural interests, is still substantially intact. Although there was a slight business excuse for this trip to Europe, I must confess that the actual bait was the opportunity to participate in the Rhododendron Conference sponsored by the Royal Horticultural Society in England. This event had been planned prior to the war, but conditions have only now permitted its materializing - and it is unlikely that a similar conference will be held for many years.

After two saturated weeks of full exposure to Rhododendrons and Azaleas, as well as English gardens and countrysides of all types, Mrs. Epstein and I are thankful that we availed ourselves of this opportunity. I am sorry that not more than eight Americans could share in this very enjoyable and educational conference.

Mr. G. G. Nearing, who also participated in this experience, can recite many highlights of the trip and, perhaps, at some future occasion treat us all to a view of his many Kodachrome impressions. I hope that 'ere this date Mr. Nearing's trigger finger has recuperated from the extraordinary strain resulting from the continual barrage of his photographic campaign. He certainly must have returned to the United States with as perfect a record as was humanly possible for one person to make.

I cannot refrain from expressing my reaction to the very keen interest in horticulture here in England. It far surpasses anything in the States. As concrete evidence, there are the period-flower shows throughout the Island, sponsored by the

Royal Horticultural Society which has a present membership of approximately 36,000 and the Alpine Garden Society with its 2,000 members. These two organizations are composed of some of the most ardent plants-people in the country. While in most respect, this Island is far behind our country in the necessities of modern civilization, we must still regard the people as our peers in horticulture.

Incidentally, there are only five persons here who are included in the membership of our Society. I have had the opportunity of meeting three of them, and it is apparent that member interest in our Society would be much more were it not for the war and the existing monetary exchange restrictions. A resolution recently adopted by our executive board will, we hope, enable additional English rock gardeners to join our Society.

This matter of membership again reminds me of the urgent need for many more keen gardeners being brought into our field. Heretofore, we have always concentrated upon appreciative plantmen for members and have not pursued a very vigorous campaign to enlist others. But if we are to continue our dues as they have been since the Society started and at the same time operate efficiently, we must gain substantially in membership. Frankly, strict economy has been practised to balance the budget and still continue our publication and other activities. And it is only through income from new members that our activities can be improved upon or augmented.

Experience has proved that the most productive source of new recruits is through our members themselves. Advertising and publicity are helpful, but they are not as effective. Much of this may sound repetitious, but it is necessary to impress upon one and all the vital need for cooperation in spreading the gospel of our belief in gardening for pleasure, diversion, relaxation and exercise.

Harold Epstein, *President.*

THE SECRETARY'S REPORT

It hardly seems appropriate to inject business matters into a day of beauty as this has been. But By-Laws must be obeyed and today, as well as viewing the beautiful gardens of Dr. and Mrs. Sherer in West Orange, and Mr. and Mrs. Buck here in Far Hills, we gather for the annual meeting of the American Rock Garden Society - the time set for the presentation of annual reports.

In comparison with societies devoted to the Rose, the Iris, the Peony and other flowers, having wide and popular appeal, ours is small numerically. But it is compact and closely knit, as are so many of the plants which inhabit the gardens of its members, and composed of keen plantmen. I have only to mention the recent pilgrimage to Sea Breeze Farm, the gardens of The Misses Hill in Lynnhaven, Va., to illustrate my point. From the beginning to the end of this delightful and stimulating experience, conversation flowed freely and easily - around plants, in the joy of sharing knowledge and experience with others and gaining likewise from them.

The pilgrimage to Sea Breeze Farm was one of the highlights of the year just ended. The annual luncheon of the society in New York City in March last was another, when members heard Mr. Alex Heimlich, of Woburn, Mass., and received gifts of plants from Mr. Walter Kolaga, of Bergenfield, N. J. On occasions such as these, we wish that distances in our country were not so great, for then a larger number of members could meet together and enjoy the personal contacts.

The regional groups were designed for this very purpose - to bring together the members living within a given area. The Northwest Group has held monthly meetings in Seattle, Wash., and made several field trips; the sub-Oregon Group

staged a very fine rock garden exhibit at the Primrose Show in Portland; some of the members in the Central Group have engaged in a round robin letter; a round robin letter is being inaugurated in California and several members there have gone on botanizing and plant collecting trips; the North Atlantic Group has had interesting meetings in New York City; and the New England Group has taken a new lease on life and arranged an interesting schedule of meetings. These programs of the regional groups are available to all members within the several areas. If more members participate, the respective officers will be encouraged and may be able to enlarge the scope of their programs.

A project of the American Rock Garden Society which has assumed considerable proportions during the last couple of years is the Seed Exchange. This has developed into a very important activity under the able directorship of Mrs. L. D. Granger. We reluctantly let her relinquish this post, and welcome as her successor, Mr. H. Lincoln Foster, of Norfolk, Conn., an ardent plantsman as all who have read his articles in the Bulletin, know. We are confident of the continued success of the Seed Exchange under his leadership.

The Bulletin has been the recipient of some very nice compliments, thanks to the good members who have cooperated and contributed worthy articles. Those written in response to previously published articles and the letters to the editor have elicited especially favorable comments. Your secretary, as editor of the Bulletin, takes this opportunity to plea publicly for more contributions to its columns. The Bulletin is the members' "mouthpiece", in which they express their viewpoints, make known their experiences with the plants in their gardens, their plant hunting trips, etc.

A concentrated drive has been made within the past few months to attract ardent gardeners as members of the American Rock Garden Society. Our president, Mr. Epstein, wrote an excellent article for the April issue of FLOWER GROWER, which issue also carried an advertisement about the society. Mr. Epstein talked before the Bedford Garden Club and the Maplewood Garden Club, his efforts being rewarded with several new members. Articles have appeared in other horticultural publications and in newspapers, including the NEW YORK TIMES, which have resulted in an addition to the membership. Through the kind cooperation of Mr. Walter Kolaga, leaflets about the society were distributed with his catalog - and twenty-five names were added to the roster in this way. These leaflets will be sent to members who are willing to place them in the hands of prospective members. With just that little extra effort on the part of every member, we can achieve a substantial growth.

Since May 1948, we have enrolled one hundred eighteen members. But for the annual turn-over, an affliction from which all societies and magazine subscription lists suffer, our membership would now closely touch the 600 mark. Actually, it is 553 - the peak in the history of the society; for we lost two through death (Mr. J. Horace Macfarland, of Harrisburg, Pa., and Mrs. Walter Tobie, of Portland, Maine); thirteen through delinquency; and twenty-five through resignations. Some one once asked, "Why do people resign?" The reasons are: "advancing years", "ill health", "sale of home and garden", and "change of plant interest".

I have been requested by our president, Mr. Epstein, to call attention to the two medals of the American Rock Garden Society. The gold medal is available as an award to a rock garden exhibit, which is outstanding from an artistic and educational viewpoint, at a national exhibition and also at important local exhibitions. The bronze medal is available, at cost, to local groups of rock gardeners as an award at local shows.

Awarding of these two medals is governed by the following scale of points: design and rock arrangement 20; planting and color blending 20; cultural perfection of plants 20; suitability of plants for their respective plantings 15; rarity of plants 15; and variety 10.

I have also been requested to remind members of the collections of slides which are available for use by members without charge. Application for the Houghton and Stout collections should be directed to Mr. Epstein; for the collection of members' gardens and the Bacher collection (the rental fee of the latter is \$5.00) to Mrs. Warder I. Higgins, Butte, Mont. The showing of any one of these collections by members before non-member groups would be one way of drawing notice to a very worth while organization - the American Rock Garden Society.

Dorothy E. Hansell, *Secretary*

REPORT OF THE SEED EXCHANGE DIRECTOR

From Oregon, from California, from Maryland and from Maine, and from many other states in between, there have come to the coffers of the Seed Exchange many mysterious packages. They have come in boxes of many kinds, in bottles, in envelopes of every description; but whatever the wrapping, its package has been filled with thrilling mystery and excitement, for each one has been a precious package of promise - promise of beauty and adventure.

The seeds in themselves are a fascinating and never-failing source of interest - the pappus of bristles so characteristic of the composite family, yet so varied; the tiny, tiny seeds of *Campanulus* and *Cypripediums*; the flattened wafer with an "eye" of the *Gentians*; the larger disk wafer of the *Lilies*; the feathery winged or cotton-like seeds of the *Anemones*; the sizeable pellet, "cellophane" enclosed, of some of the *Iris*; and so on, ad infinitum.

And when one thinks of the complete plant life - roots, stems, leaves and flowers - each according to its kind, that is encased in one of these seeds, one's reverence for Nature's wonders is increased. As the seeds have gone out to all parts of the country, it has been a pleasure to think of the gardens which have been glorified by this friendly exchange among members of the American Rock Garden Society.

Besides the distribution of the seeds, more than one hundred letters have been written to members of the Society, exclusive of the correspondence with the Secretary; and an analytical list of seeds sent out was prepared to show the relative demand for each variety. Thanks are due to Mr. Epstein and Mrs. Hansell for their interest, suggestions and cooperation in matters pertaining to the Exchange.

It has been interesting to trace the growth of the Seed Exchange from such reports as were available to the writer. In 1940-41, the report of Mr. Archie Thornton states that 192 packets of seed were received for distribution and 90 packets were sent to members in nine states. In 1944, Mrs. Hildegard Schneider reported that 536 packets were sent to 49 members. For the current year, 1948-49, we are happy to report that 229 packets have been received from 35 donors in 16 states and from British Columbia, India, Greece and Turkey, and that 1,164 packets have been sent to 66 members in 28 states.

These figures are certainly proof that the Seed Exchange is an important asset of the American Rock Garden Society and that members are cooperating wonderfully in making available seeds of some of the rarer rock garden and alpine plants and in propagating these plants so that their number and usefulness are increasing.

To all who have so generously contributed the seeds (some of you many times) I give my own heartfelt thanks as well as the gratitude of the recipients. It is you, the donors, and you, the recipients, who have made the Seed Exchange a success.

It is with regret that I am compelled to give up the directorship, for I have enjoyed your letters and your friendly cooperation. I know that you will give the same loyal support to the new Director, Mr. H. Lincoln Foster, and I wish him and you every success. May your gardens grow in beauty and in the cultivation of the choicer rock plants.

Mary P. Granger, *Director*

IN MEMORIAM

MR. E. L. REBER

Just as we were going to press, we received word of the untimely and tragic death of Mr. E. L. Reber, of Seattle, Wash., who had long been closely identified with the Washington Unit. His death occurred last month during a fire which completely destroyed his home, filled with beautiful treasures. Mr. Reber had assisted his sister to safety, then entered his home again and apparently suffered a heart attack. The Washington Unit of the American Rock Garden Society is gathering a fund for a memorial rock garden planting at the University of Washington Arboretum. The University's ARBORETUM BULLETIN carried a very beautiful tribute to Mr. Reber in the pages of its current issue.

NEWS and EVENTS

BOSTON FOR 1950 ANNUAL MEETING

The executive board of the American Rock Garden Society has accepted the invitation of the New England Regional Group to hold the next annual meeting in Boston in the spring of 1950. The exact date and complete plans will be announced later. Mrs. Clement S. Houghton has offered to open her beautiful garden and entertain the members at her home in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

Another visit will be made to Garden in the Woods, which is a wild flower sanctuary and botanic garden at South Sudbury, about twenty miles from Boston. The thirty acres of woodland and meadow, hills and valleys, with a brook and ponds, swamps and open bogs comprise also the home grounds of its owners, Mr. Will C. Curtis, landscape designer and lecturer, and Mr. Richard H. Stiles, horticulturist. Here they are bringing together all the native plants hardy in this latitude and conducting experiments in propagation and cultivation. There are more than two thousand species, including ferns and flowering plants from eastern states, the far west and states in between, the southern mountains and Alaska; also a comprehensive collection of true alpines, both eastern and western, in specially prepared places.

MEETINGS OF NEW ENGLAND GROUP

The following meetings have been scheduled by the New England Regional Group for the fall and early winter:

September 14, 2 P. M., Rock Garden Plants for Summer Blooming, illustrated by Mrs. Lucien B. Taylor.

October 19, hour to be set, Rock Gardens, illustrated, by Mr. Harold Epstein.
November 16, 2 P. M., Rock Gardening Where Water is Available, symposium with Mr. Will Curtis leader.

January 11, 2 P. M. Primulas, illustrated, by Mrs. Harry Hayward. Also annual meeting and election of officers.

THE MONTGOMERY CONIFER COLLECTION

Dwarf evergreens which, in their springtime coloring, range from sky-blue through the greens to gleaming yellow are among the two hundred specimens assembled in the Montgomery Conifer Collection at the New York Botanical Garden. A gift of Colonel Robert H. Montgomery from his estate at Cos Cob, Conn, the newly planted collection was dedicated on May 26, 1949.

The yellow-needled dwarf, which is startling in its color, is *Taxus baccata* var. *aurescens*.

The Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*) is most widely represented with horticultural forms, a large proportion of which are of dimensions suitable for a rock garden. *P. a. diffusa* is one of the smallest of all.



Courtesy Journal of N. Y. Botanical Garden
Picea pungens var. *glauca* "R. H. Montgomery"

A prostrate form of the Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) found at timberline in New Hampshire is in the collection. A prostrate form of the Serbian Spruce (*Picea omorika*) is as yet unknown in botanical or horticultural literature.

Newest to appear in print is the dwarf Blue Spruce (*Picea pungens* var. *glauca*) named for Colonel Montgomery, which was formally described as clone "R. H. Montgomery" in the JOURNAL of the New York Botanical Garden, May 1949, and christened during the dedication of the Montgomery Conifer Collection.

The New York Botanical Garden is open to visitors without charge every day in the year. The Montgomery Conifers cover about eight acres in the southern tip of the grounds.

LETTERS from MEMBERS

Dear Editor:

I am a new member of the American Rock Garden Society and would like to reply to the question in the May-June issue as to whether to encourage and assist the novice or further the interests of the experienced rock gardener. I vote for the experienced gardener. I should like more information on the making of screes, moraines, dry walls - these to be placed in an ordinary 60' x 150' lot. But the plants to be grown there are to be a challenge to me - that's the excitement of gardening. Even if I can't have the very choice things, I enjoy reading about others who do.

Mrs. Ellsworth Archer, Vallejo, Cal.

To The Editor:

Mr. Heimlich's article in the Bulletin was very interesting. Being a beginner, I appreciate his point of view. I have gotten a great deal of help and inspiration from the Bulletin.

Could you - or another member of the Society - tell me where I can get seedlings of *Abies lasiocarpa* described in the May-June issue?

Mrs. William L. Less II, Carmel, N. Y.

Dear Editor:

Thank you for bringing my book, THE PASSING PARADE, to the attention of the members attending the annual meeting in Far Hills. The plants described are native to the northeast, but I have found many of them as far south as Georgia.

As Mr. Kolaga may have told you, the lettering in the book is pen and ink over typewriting in order to have it photograph clearly. All the pictures were drawn from live specimens. The book is the result of two years' work.

Naturally, I hope some of the members will be interested in getting THE PASSING PARADE - their orders may be sent to Mr. Walter Kolaga, in Bergenfield, or directly to me. The price is \$3.00.

Frederick M. Oswald, Hackensack, N. J.

Dear Editor:

Thought you and other members of the Society might like to know that I have been taking a great many kodachromes of rock garden plants - these have been taken, in most instances, very close to show the actual flower. Most slides show the rocks or rock formation, rather than the plants in detail.

I intend to rent these slides to interested parties or organizations at the rate of 50 for \$2.00 or 100 for \$3.00 plus transportation and insurance. I also expect to charge a fee of 25c for each slide damaged while out of my possession.

In July, I am planning a vacation in Colorado and the high plains of Oklahoma to take pictures of suitable material there.

Mrs. Ann Tegtmeier, Omaha, Nebr.

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