

# BULLETIN

*of the*

## AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

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Vol. 9

July - August, 1951

No. 4

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### PLANTS WHICH PLEASE ME THIS YEAR

DORETTA KLABER, QUAKERTOWN, PA.

THESE notes are being written on a rainy 23rd of June, a resume of some of last year's seedlings that have bloomed or are blooming now in my garden.

*Aethionema armenum* and *Ae. schistosum* are just as lovely small shrubs (6 inches) as others I have grown of this genus, and anyone who doesn't grow the *Aethionemas* is making a big mistake. All have delightful silvery foliage and fragrant pink flowers—except one, the only one so far that has proved insignificant in bloom, and it was from seed sold me as "grandiflora". All seem easy and long lived.

*Androsace sarmentosa* is another easy high alpine and increases pleasantly. Its soft pink flowers growing six inches or so high from its neat rosettes have real distinction.

*Aster Forrestii* and *A. Purdomi* (I lost track of which was which) (*Purdomi* should be slightly smaller and a little later—Ed.) both have hairy foliage about four inches high, above which the tall lavender daisies with orange centers made a wonderful splash of color in the garden and elicited much admiration.

*Aquilegia perplexans* was a delight — low delicate foliage and a shower of its equally delicate, eight-inch high, long-spurred flowers in pink and purple. It bloomed for a long season.

*Campanula Raddeana* has been blossoming with a profusion that is amazing, but as the old flowers hang on and give a slightly rusty appearance to the mass, it is a little disappointing. Then, while the foliage is clean and lovely, the lavender to purple flower heads are so heavy that they have a tendency to fall over. Because some plants in a less favorable position have stood up better, I guess starvation may be one answer to this defect.

*Chrysanthemum alpinum* has made delightful domes of small fleshy leaves, and is now beginning to open ordinary-looking white daisies.

*Delphinium nudicaule* surprised me. Raised from seed a year ago, it bloomed all summer and fall to such an extent that I didn't expect to see it again. But here it is blooming this summer too. I like the coral-red flowers on the foot-high plants with their low, fleshy foliage, especially against the lavender bushes, which seem to give it the little shade and protection it enjoys.

I'm a bit disgusted with *Erigerons*, which, with few exceptions, are soft and weedy looking, and not really first-class garden plants. *Erigeron compositus* is nice with its low feathery firm gray foliage and early white daisies, and *E. glabellus* is giving some mild lavender color now, when one is grateful for whatever blossoms. Though it looks well against the wall in front of which it is planted, its 15 inches

would be too tall for most rock gardens. *E. roseus* is a cute little thing, but the flowers so small that they hardly count.

*Gentiana hascombensis* is blooming with lovely blue trumpets in clusters, the clumps about 6 inches high. This is a hybrid form which seems easy. *G. gracilipes* is just starting to open, with rather small blue or purple flowers at the ends of its spraying system, but when enough of them expand, I believe it will be effective, for there are many clusters of buds. *G. Lagodechaina* has enormous blue single trumpets on stems that recline, rising at the tip.

*Silene Keiskei* (to take it out of its alphabetical order) is planted with the gentians, and its deep pink is rather interesting with the deep blue of its neighbors. Speaking of *Silenes*, both *S. Wherryi* and *S. pennsylvanica* bloomed their large heads off earlier, and were for a long time bright spots in the garden. *Wherryi* is a wonderful warm pink, *pennsylvanica* almost red.

*Iris Forrestii* is a lovely soft clear yellow, growing from a foot to 18 inches high, and should bloom with *I. sibirica*, making a good foil. I had it with Iris Kingdom Ward, whose purplish blooms I found interesting rather than beautiful.

*Linum salsoloides* makes fine mats of delicate leafage. The flowers are as Farrer describes them, white with a purplish base, but can't touch the blue flax for charm.

*Potentilla fragiformis* has rather large velvety strawberry leaves, and large good yellow flowers, but this first year saw little bloom. Perhaps another year it will do better.

Penstemons have given me a lot of needed color this year. I am trying all sorts. Some are weeds, some die after blooming, some sit there and don't bloom. They are a valuable family, however, for late color in the garden, and I'm glad the Penstemon Society is trying to help us get them straightened out. Many of course are too big for rock gardens, but there seem to be plenty of shrubby small ones if we can just get them going.

*Primula farinosa* did well for me this year, and the rosettes look happily established. *P. chrysopa*, which belongs to the *farinosa* group, had taller stems, 12 inches or over instead of the 3 inches of *farinosa*. Though the leaves do not have the meal underneath as in *farinosa*, the stems are silvery. The flowers, in shades of lavender and pink, were fragrant and lasted a long time. I think it important to know that *chrysopa* is definitely deciduous. Where *farinosa* dies down to a silvery bud, *chrysopa* disappears so completely, I thought last fall mine had died, a greater disappointment because the seedlings had looked so healthy. This spring up they came in force, and seem to be spreading fast, with numbers of small rooted side shoots. Evidently the species will be permanent. I had planted them in two positions, one open and moistened by seepage from a small pool, the other below a rock wall, where they are shaded from the afternoon sun. The latter did better, or perhaps only looked better with a good background, for all grew well.

## FAVORITE CORNERS

THE Bulletin would like to publish in every issue one or more Favorite Corners from the rock gardens of members. Have you one spot which makes a specially appealing picture, a combination of rocks and plants so arranged that you feel a deep satisfaction every time you look at it? Then surely a photograph of it will please other rock gardeners too.

Spread as we are over thousands of miles, few of us can enjoy any gardens except those of our nearby friends. How do hundreds of others create the alpine



scene? What stone and plant material do they use, and with what artistic results? We should like to know.

You undoubtedly have a photograph of your Favorite Corner, or can take one. It must be in black and white, as we cannot use color. To secure best results, reveal details and bring everything in focus, it is best to stop down the shutter to f.11 or smaller, which of course requires a longer exposure than when your aperture is wide open. The print should if possible be made glossy for reproduction. Your



A favorite corner in one of the rock gardens of Mr. Leonard Buck, Far Hills, N. J.

local photographer will know how to do that, provided you have a good, clear negative.

One of the secrets of making your rock garden look well in a photograph is to weed it meticulously beforehand. An enthusiast can look through his weeds with X-ray eyes, and see what is behind them, but the camera can't do that. In the picture every stalk of grass or bit of straw stands out like a Sequoia, distracting attention from the choice Primula or gentian behind it to an incredible degree.

Along with the photograph, send this essential information. What kind of rock is represented? Is it local or brought from a distance, a natural outcropping or artificial construction or a combination of the two? What plants are most conspicuously in evidence, and what has been done to satisfy their cultural requirements?

No matter how small or unpretentious the garden, there is no limit to the perfection of picturesqueness which it can attain. A yard-square miniature may be as worthy to be shown and admired as one covering acres. Look over each angle of

your rock work to see what part represents your best efforts, and if nothing satisfies you, perhaps you can alter or rebuild to improve it.

It is safe to say that every rock garden was inspired by the sight of some other. The best inspiration the Society can offer is just such a series of views of the work of its members.

We begin with a corner in one of the many rock gardens of our vice president Leonard J. Buck in Far Hills, N. J. The spot isn't necessarily his favorite, since the editor is publishing this photograph without consulting him, though permission was given to take the photograph. The fact is, there are so many favorite corners at Far Hills that we could easily have selected several different ones, and perhaps Mr. Buck will oblige us later with a picture of his favorite.

The rock is a natural outcropping of trap or basalt, laid bare and somewhat modified and extended by Zenon Schreiber, who also did the planting. This consists largely of a group of Guyencourt Rhododendron, the hybrid between *R. pubescens* and *R. Keiskei*. The plants are in fine health, although the chemical nature of this rock, an ancient lava-flow, tends toward alkalinity, while, as everyone should know, Rhododendrons require an acid soil. In this case the acidity is secured by using leaf mold and acid peat, and when necessary, a judicious application of acidifying chemicals.

The plants, though appearing in full bloom, had been more generously covered with flowers which were cut by frost a day or two before the picture was taken.

## IRIS BAKERIANA

HAROLD EPSTEIN, LARCHMONT, N. Y.

ONE of the bulbous plants that vies for early blooming honors is *Iris Bakeriana*. This is one of several winter bloomers included in the Reticulate group of *Iris*, the most common being the type, *Iris reticulata* or its color varieties Cantab, Hercules, J. S. Dijt, etc. All the bulbs in this group are distinguished by a netted outer tunic similar to some of the crocuses, and the production of offsets on the parent bulb.

*Iris Bakeriana* introduced in 1887 from the mountains of Central Armenia in Asia Minor has never been as readily available as *Iris reticulata* although it appears to be as easily propagated. It is now listed by some of the specialists in uncommon bulbs, and is recommended as an excellent rock garden subject.

The iris bloomed as early as January 20th a few years ago in pots in an unprotected but covered cold frame, although it is generally in bloom by February 15th. In a protected and well drained spot in the garden blossoms may be expected by mid-March with the crocuses and snowdrops. The flowers are about two to three inches across and are a soft blue color with dark violet falls which at times appear almost black. These charming flowers have the added feature of a delightful fragrance resembling violets.

The foliage is cylindrical in form with ribs, not four sided as with the other reticulata species. After blooming, *Iris Bakeriana* usually splits into two or three sections, some of which will flower in the succeeding season! In contrast to this, *Iris reticulata* and others of this group form many small offsets which require a few years to reach blooming size.

Bakeriana is easy in pots and a delight when forced and brought indoors during those inclement winter days.





*Pyxidantha barbulate* after three years in a rock garden.

## MOVING A FAMOUS MIFF

G. G. NEARING, RAMSEY, N. J.

A plant famed equally for its extreme dwarfness, in height a fraction of an inch, and its difficulty under cultivation, is *Pyxidantha barbulate*, inappropriately called pyxie moss. The name has nothing to do with the fanciful pixie, but is derived from a Greek word for a chalice-shaped jewel box made of boxwood, and refers to the shape of the flower.

The creeping stems, flat on the ground or just under it, radiate into a rug of foliage very like a moss, deep green with red tips and shoots. Single plants may cover an area of several square feet without rising an inch above the surface. Then in earliest spring, pure white flowers star the whole, often hiding all but the marginal leaves, adding to the established charm an almost miraculous beauty, yet to the stature virtually nothing.

Anyone who has seen *Diapensia lapponica* above timber line, and felt the inevitable craving to bring it down into the garden where it will not grow, might suppose that this little lowland relative from the pine barrens is the answer to his prayer. But it too, when transplanted in the ordinary manner, passes away like a fairy gift.

Yet the photograph shows a three-year-old plant in the rock garden of E. L. Totten at Ho Ho Kus, New Jersey, far from the barrens, wandering happily if somewhat unreasonably over its own and its neighbors' premises. It gives every indication of having come to stay in these strange surroundings fifty or more miles from its home and in an alien soil. If the bloom is less generous than in its native wilds, this may be due to the astonishing circumstance that it is here adventuring

over a block of limestone on a bogless ledge. In another garden, in peaty sand beside a lake, it outblooms the wilding.

Other permanently successful plantings prove *Pyxidantha* a worthy garden subject, at least for the coastal regions of eastern United States, requiring only that its needs be understood. Chief of these demands is moisture. The apparently dry sand of its native barrens constitutes in reality one vast bog, dry only at the surface. A few inches down we find perennial dampness, fed and drained by winding streams the color of strong tea, that flow through a million acres of sphagnum moss, shaded by white cedar, magnolia, inkberry and sweet pepperbush.

Over the very sphagnum of the road ditches and out into the sand beneath the pitch pines, creeps the pyxie in inexhaustible abundance, not a xerophyte at all, but a bog plant. Here then is the clue to its culture. Plant it a few inches above the bog in a few bushels of the sand it grew in. Or make a mixture of fine sand two parts, sedge peat one part. If sedge peat is not available, substitute half and half peat moss and leafmold.

Transplanting should be done with an unbroken ball of sand, not too easy when you count the shrub roots involved, and consider the astonishing depth to which the pyxie roots penetrate. The best way is to use a large tin container with a lid to hold in the moisture on the wayhome, and depth enough to hold a foot of soil with some air space above it.

After having selected a young plant that will fit into the can without cutting or crowding, invert the container over it, lid off, and cut away the sand around it with a spade sharp enough to shear all foreign roots cleanly. As the cutting progresses, keep pressing down the container so that it encloses the ball (really a cylinder) and work out as deep a ball as will go into the can. Then run the spade beneath, cutting all roots, and so freeing the ball completely. If the operation has been carried out carefully, the container can now be removed, the ball slid into it with the roots down. Or if you can trust yourself to remember that wrong side up is right, instead of removing the can, put the lid on upside down beneath it, and keep everything inverted, except the plant inside. In this condition the pyxie will stand a long journey.

Even if these directions cannot be followed, the pyxie should always be moved with at least some of the sand it grows in, for it may and probably does depend on some microscopic fungus around its roots, as many plants are now known to do. Unless this fungus can be brought with it and established immediately, the plant promptly dies.

If you have no bog or poolside to provide the needed moisture supply, you can grow this difficult beauty above a dry bank by unailing use of the hose and the addition of a mulch. Naturally for so small a plant ordinary mulches will not do, and sawdust would probably make it die of horror. Repeated thin sprinklings of spruce or hemlock needles seem to work best, and a position in moderate shade beneath one of these needle-bearing trees makes the mulching automatic. But let the hose fail for only two or three days in dry weather, and you will soon find that the pyxie has departed for some pine-barren heaven.

It has long been assumed that *Pyxidantha barbulate* requires an acid soil, and there is no reason to doubt that this is the case. In rock gardens of limestone, many acid soil plants succeed if a layer of acid, peaty mold can be maintained above the rock. Frequent watering, repeated thin dustings of peat, continual addition of acid-generating mulch, all contribute toward this end.

When explorers returned from western China told how mountains of limestone were clothed with a dense growth of *Rhododendron*, some gardeners jumped to the conclusion that these species would grow in alkaline soil. They were wrong. There was acid soil on the limestone.



## SOME NOTES ON SPECIES TULIPS

ELIZABETH LAWRENCE, CHARLOTTE, N. C.

LAST year Mr. Moody sent me a collection of forty rock garden tulips some of which were new to me, and some of which I had grown before. This spring, after finding out which had survived the second season, I went through my files to assemble these notes on all of the little tulips that I have grown in Charlotte and previously in Raleigh.

*Tulipa acuminata* bloomed the first season on April 16th, a total of one flower from three bulbs, the second season none. Anyway, with its long stringy petals, it is more odd than beautiful.

*T. Aucheriana* opened two seasons in the middle of April and looks happy. It is one of the most delightful kinds, with starchy, mallow-pink flowers expanding wide in the sun.

*T. australis* blossomed once on April 9th. Of the six bulbs planted, not one showed leaf or bud after the first season.

*T. Batalinii* blooms with *T. tarda*, *Aucheriana*, *Hageri* and *chrysantha*, between the first and middle of April. This distinct and lovely species with urn-shaped buds the color of the Horticultural Chart's aureolin yellow, seems still satisfied after its second season.

*T. biflora* flowered once, late in March, and that was the end of twelve bulbs originally planted. On second trial it did not bloom at all. The charming blossom, yellow and white, as I remember it, and something like *T. tarda*, only daintier, was worth the attempt. The var. *turkestanica*, planted once, did not bloom.

*T. chrysantha* bears a flower of soft yellow on a very short stem. Though this blossomed well for two seasons, I have no further check on it, nor on others tried at the same time, for I left them behind in Raleigh.

*T. Clusiana* not only persists indefinitely, but increases. It usually offers its pearl-white stars soon after the middle of March, but sometimes not until April. In good soil the stalks may reach eighteen inches, and then it seems a little lanky for the rock garden. Though it is always springing up in odd places, I have never known whether it seeds itself, or whether little bulbs scatter when something else is transplanted.

Neither so reliable nor so persistent, *T. florentina* blooms about the same time, a patch sometimes flowering for several seasons. As its synonym, *T. sylvestris*, indicates, I think it should be placed in some shade. Also it likes more humus and more moisture than most species. Flowers the color of buttercups are borne on stems as long as those of *T. Clusiana*.

*T. Forsteriana* is very large and showy, much too large for the rock garden, or at least for one that features the smaller species. One year the buds of the variety Defiance were killed by the cold. Cantab opened March 8th, Princeps April 6th.

*T. Hageri* is one of the most satisfactory species, and certainly one of the most attractive if it can be planted where its terra cotta flowers show to advantage. It is very floriferous, usually coming the first week in April.

The Water-lily tulip is one of the most precocious. The earliest date I have for it is the first week in March. This is not one of my favorites, as the peppermint-striped flowers seem too big for the short stems. The large and showy multicolored forms and hybrids in the Kaufmanniana group bloom over a long period, beginning this year with Solanus on the second of March and ending with Henriette on the

22nd, the last continuing on into April. Not only long lasting, Henriette is one of the most beautiful, very large and urn-shaped, ivory with rose flames on the outside. To me this is one of the most superb of all tulips. Solanus is lemon yellow with red flakes, the variety coccinea bright red with a gold center, Bellini white inside and red out, Fritz Kreisler large, pink. Cesar Franck, which I have not had, is said to be one of the earliest tulips, coming even before most of the crocuses. The flowers are deep yellow, with scarlet flames on the outer divisions.



*Tulipa tarda* with pale yellow flowers on short stems.

The year I left Raleigh, I had *T. linifolia* for the first time, blooming on April 7th, the cup-shaped flowers scarlet and black.

*T. Marjoletti* bloomed in April, one year the 8th, the following year the 24th, with gay red and yellow flowers on long slender stalks. When I left it behind, it seemed well established.

*T. Ostrowskyana* seems to be a rare one, concerning which I can find nothing except that it comes from Turkestan and is closely related to *T. Oculus-solis*. My single bulb died without flowering.

*T. persica*, supposed to be one of the late species, bloomed in Raleigh toward the end of March and early in April, which is about midseason. It did very well there, but here in Charlotte died out. Mrs. Wilder says that with her it was the most persistent species. It is certainly one of the prettiest, like a little piece of cloisonne.

Though *T. praecox* sounds like an early one, it did not bloom until the end of March. It has now been with me for two seasons, a very pretty bright red, like a single early, with conical flowers on six-inch stems. This comes from central Europe.



*T. praestans* opens in March, sometimes rather early. There is usually more than one flower to a stem, very large, showy and brilliant red.

*T. pulchella* is brilliant and difficult, with flowers like tiny Darwins of pomegranate purple. Out of two trials it bloomed for me once in the middle of March, in a year when the middle of March was early in the season. I think it is generally considered a difficult species (Mrs. Wilder writes that it lasts only a year or two) but it is worth any amount of trouble for a single bloom in early spring.

As I write, it seems to me that the few really difficult species are early ones. *T. saxatilis* is another. This is the only tulip I have tried consistently and conscientiously both in Raleigh and in Charlotte without ever having a bloom. Year after year it puts up a single leaf, but never a flower. Mrs. Wilder gives the same report of it, and it seems generally to be a poor bloomer in cultivation. Mr. Darnell, in "Winter Blossoms" says this is due to freezing of the early buds, and I feel sure that this is correct. He suggests planting the bulbs out of reach of the morning sun.

*T. Schrenkii*, which I cannot find in any garden literature, (It is described briefly by Sampson Clay in Present Day Rock Garden. Ed.) came from Mr. Moody. It flowered the second year, not the first, and was one of the earliest, coming at the same time as some of the water-lily tulips. The red, yellow-edged segments are long and stringy, like those of *T. acuminata*.

*T. Sprengeri*, said to be the last to bloom, and opening in mid-June in the latitude of New York, bloomed for me on April 26th. That was in Raleigh, so I do not know anything further about it. I must try it again, for it is a vivid and spectacular species.

*T. stellata* is very like *T. Clusiana*, and blooms at the same time. So far it has proved equally successful.

*T. tarda*, sometimes listed as *T. dasystemon*, is an exceedingly floriferous species, with three to five yellow and white stars to a stem. The stalks are so short that the flowers seem to be lying on the curly gray leaves. I have had this a number of times, and once the buds were caught by the cold, which seems odd now that I think of it, for it does not bloom until April.

*T. urumiensis*, a rare species from Asia Minor, did not bloom. This sounds like a discouraging note to end on, but I had only one bulb, and must try again.

On the whole I find the botanical tulips the most rewarding and the easiest to please of all the rock garden bulbs.

## ANNUAL MEETING, MAY 26, 1951

THE annual meeting of the American Rock Garden Society held at Skylands Farms, in the Ramapo Mountains, the home of Mr. Clarence Lewis and Mrs. M. J. Fitzpatrick, Saturday, May 26th, 1951 was a most delightful affair. There were about seventy members and guests present, and preliminary to the business meeting each announced their name in turn, enabling all to know who was there.

Upon arrival at Skylands, a committee headed by Mr. Totten, set up a table of rock plants contributed by various members for sale, and a goodly sum was realized and many people made happy by another treasure to add to their rock garden.

The business meeting was called to order by Mr. Harold Epstein, president, at 11 o'clock. Mrs. Dorothy Hansell gave a report as former secretary, and reported one sustaining member had become a life member, six have become sustaining members, and six of the active members have become family members. She is willing to

continue as corresponding secretary, but asked for someone to take over the duties of financial secretary. Mrs. H. D. Thomas has been appointed recording secretary.

In the absence of the treasurer, Mrs. Marion S. Reid, (who is still in England where she went to attend the horticultural conference), Mrs. Hansell read her report showing a balance in bank April 30, 1951, of \$878.59, and detailed copies of the report were distributed to each present.

Regrets were read from the Misses Hill of Virginia, and our honorary president, Mrs. Houghton, that they were unable to be present.

Mr. Epstein added his request to that of Mrs. Hansell for someone to offer to take on the duties of financial secretary, and Mrs. Gerald Curtin, Yonkers, offered to do so for the ensuing year. Mr. Epstein then made a strong plea for more assistance with the Bulletin. He said this is the lifeblood of the organization, but without material for printing, there can be no Bulletin. He said Mr. Nearing had taken the job as editor with only enough material for the May-June issue, but the box was then empty of manuscripts for the next issue which must go to the printer in July. Will each member try to send in something - a story of trial and perhaps failure or of success - or some experience with rock gardening. There was much discussion about where to procure material but the final plea was the same - "Please do contribute - it is your Bulletin". Mr. Epstein also stated that we need more new members even to keep up our present number for we lose some each year for one reason or another, and he invited guests present to become members. The question of raising dues to insure continuance of the Bulletin was also discussed, but it was decided to keep them at the present amount.

The terms of five directors expire this year, whose names Mrs. Hansell read, and the president asked for suggestions of names. Mr. VanMelle asked to be excused from another term, but his request was voted down. Mr. Lewis moved, seconded by Mrs. Kydd, the following directors be named: Mr. Kurt W. Baasch, H. Lincoln Foster, Peter J. VanMelle, Mrs. M. J. Fitzpatrick and Dr. C. R. Worth. The secretary was instructed to cast one ballot, which was done.

There was some discussion about meetings for the coming year and the method to pursue to insure a better attendance. It is embarrassing to a speaker and to the members present if only a half dozen appear at a meeting. The president asked for suggestions from members as to what they would like for programs, to be sent to him. He reported it seemed expedient to keep the present meeting place, as any hotel would charge fifteen to twenty dollars for a small room, but here we are fortunate in having the Horticultural Society allow us the use of their quarters without any charge.

Mrs. Hansell read reports from the various sections of the Rock Garden Society - New England Regional Group, Northwestern Unit, and Middle Atlantic Region, telling of their activities for the past year, which were very interesting and varied. The California Unit reported that because of a scattered membership, they are not able to hold meetings yet, but have a Robin that gets around and seems to be enjoyed by all who participate.

Mrs. Hansell also read the report of the Seed Exchange Chairman, Mrs. Madeleine Harding, showing 578 seed packets received from 62 donors. These were divided and 1000 packets distributed to 89 requests at a total cost of \$19.27, leaving a surplus from the amount received with requests of \$5.25 to be turned over to the Society. Mrs. Harding was heartily commended for her splendid handling of a very difficult task.

Mr. Epstein expressed the appreciation of the Society to Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Fitzpatrick for having them for the annual meeting; it is a privilege all are enjoying.



Mr. Lewis replied it was a pleasure to have them - the last time they were there was in 1942.

There being no further business, Mr. Epstein gave a short resume of his recent trip to Great Britain to the International Conference on Horticulture, which trip was 1/10 of 1% business and 99.9% horticultural. He and his wife visited many gardens in the 1400 mile trip in England, Scotland and Ireland, heard many very interesting papers on various subjects presented by various prominent people, visited several notable flower shows, beautiful in spite of a late season and continuous rain, hail and snow, and enjoyed several high teas, luncheons and banquets given in honor of visitors to the Conference. Incidentally there will be a report of the various papers read and discussions of them published in a bound volume for about \$1.50 by the Alpine Garden Society.

After the meeting adjourned, the members distributed themselves with their box lunches under trees about the terrace, also enjoying the liquid refreshments provided by our hosts. After luncheon several hours were spent in inspecting the plantings of all sorts of rare and unusual trees, shrubs, perennial and annual plants and rock gardens scattered over acres of this beautiful estate. Many people took bending exercises to read the labels which were so generously used in all the plantings, making it a very educational as well as delightful day in the Ramapo Mountains.

### Statement of Net Receipts and Disbursements For the Year Ending April 30, 1951

Cash in bank April 30, 1950	\$1,753.43
Net Receipts for the year:	
Current dues 1950/51:	
Regular	\$ 683.00
Sustaining	80.00
Family	65.00
	\$ 828.00
Prepaid dues:	
Family 1951/52	\$ 15.00
Regular 1951/52	167.50
Regular 1952/53	81.50
Regular 1953/54	3.00
	267.00
Contributions	11.68
	\$1,106.68
Net Disbursements for the year:	
Bulletin Costs:	
Printing	\$910.50
Cuts and engravings	194.26
Mailing & Postage	143.78
Compensation of editor	100.00
Other Expenses	25.24
	\$1,373.78
Deduct:	
Advertising receipts	\$111.68
Sale of back issues	57.60
	169.28

Net Bulletin cost	\$1,204.50	
Secretary's compensation	441.63	
Printing, stationery and supplies	60.27	
Postage	88.45	
Telephone and telegraph	29.26	
Bank service charges	9.32	
Expense of meetings	9.16	
Regional allotments	66.93	
Medals and awards	28.00	
Seed Exchange	24.00	
Cornell bulletin	20.00	
	<hr/>	1,981.52
Deduct - Excess of disbursements over receipts for the year ending April 30, 1951		<hr/> 874.84
Cash in bank April 30, 1951		\$ 878.59

### Balance Sheet as at April 30, 1951

#### ASSETS

Cash in Bank \$ 878.59

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#### LIABILITIES and NET WORTH

Dues Paid in Advance:

Year 1951/52	\$ 252.50	
Year 1952/53	129.50	
Year 1953/54	3.00	
	<hr/>	\$ 385.00

Net Worth at April 30, 1951 493.59

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**\$ 878.59**

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NOTE: *No reserve is set up on Life Memberships received to date.*

### REGULATIONS FOR THE SEED EXCHANGE

**O**UR Seed Exchange Director, Miss Madeleine Harding, 22 Robinson St., Cambridge, Mass., after a season of unprecedented activity, feels obligated to ask the co-operation of the members in a more systematic procedure, which will be to their interest as well as hers.

All seeds should be mailed to arrive at the Exchange between September 1st and December 1st. There is no point in sending them during the summer, when everyone, including the Director, is busy with other matters. The deadline at the end of November is necessary to enable the Director to sort and list the contributions within a reasonable time, and place the list in the hands of the membership soon enough for early sowing. No credit will be given members whose contributions reach the Director after the deadline.

As you know, the Seed Exchange is a free distribution, the members contributing the seeds and the Director her time. The only cost to members requesting seeds is postage and a self-addressed envelope (Brown manila is best). It is not hard to estimate the amount of postage needed.



To become a member of the Exchange and share in the first distribution, you must contribute seeds, and it is requested that these seeds be only such as are suitable for the rock garden. While rigid rules as to suitability cannot be laid down, members will understand what is meant. Please mark packets legibly and in ink. Questions of spelling can be ironed out by the Director and the Editor provided the contributor furnishes a definite clue.

After the requests of contributors have been filled, those of non-contributors are considered, and all members of the Society are invited to share in this surplus, which especially last year when no deadline was set, amounted to a considerable quantity, with much still on hand, some of which will be still viable in 1952.

### STRANGE FATE OF AN ALPINE SHRUBLET

**M**ING Trees like the one illustrated would seem at first glance to have nothing in common with rock gardening. Only after investigating the ritual of their construction does the connection become apparent.

A complete Ming assemblage consists of a dish costing up to \$3.50 which



Ming tree

seems to be partly filled with dyed sand, a contorted (presumably with the aid of steam) branched Manzanita, pied mahogany red and gray along the trunk, costing less than \$1.00, and some densely massed woolly foliage which may be either silver-gray or dyed some shade of green. This foliage brings \$1.50 a pound, and is known in the trade as Peruvian Ming Moss.

To makers of Ming, the nature of this "moss" has been until recently a mystery. Is it a moss, and does it come from Peru? Skeptical but non-botanical opinion reached the incorrect conclusion that it is a lichen, while suspicion placed its origin nearer California.

It is an *Eriogonum*, probably *E. caespitosum*, though if you were to shake together in a hat thirty or so of the 200 named "species" of *Eriogonum*, any one you drew might be the right one, or for that matter, all might be. In fact many of these "species" undoubtedly originated by being shaken together in a botanist's hat. It comes from rocky slopes in the Sierra Nevada, where the landowners stand guard with shotguns to deter poachers.

"A strange race of most improbable-looking Rocky Mountain Umbellifers", wrote Farrer of *Eriogonum*. So improbable do they look that botanists later moved them far, far away into the Buckwheat Family, where they now rest uneasily. The Ming Moss one consists of a sprawling woody stem supporting a densely packed mass of foliage rosettes, each curled leaf coated with a whitish wool after the manner of cudweed. When the stem of the *Eriogonum* is lifelessly grafted on the branch of the manzanita, with a bit of *Parmelia* or other lichen glued on to cover the joint, the resemblance to an evergreen bough in a Japanese painting is really striking.

Several species of *Eriogonum* have been recommended for the rock garden, one of them *E. caespitosum*, which has yellow flowers in umbels, but anyone wishing to try it should collect on days with poor shotgun visibility. *E. flavum*, also yellow, ramifies into a number of forms or species, some found as far north as Montana, dispelling all doubt as to hardiness. *E. Lobbi* is yellowish white, *E. niveum* white or pink, *E. ovalifolium* red.

Essentially plants of the desert, *Eriogonums* should be growable from the Rockies westward, with increasing difficulty of cultivation as they are brought east. Some have become established in England. Only the shrubby and perennial species are likely to meet with much favor, and these for foliage rather than the flowers, which are usually sparse. The great majority of *Eriogonums* are annual.

## PLANT WITH A SINGULAR HISTORY

THE AURICULA by Sir Rowland Biffen, 164 pages,  
Cambridge University Press, 1951, \$3.00

TO those who have thought of *Auricula* as just another primrose, it may come as a surprise to learn that hybrid races under this name have for centuries held an important position in European horticulture, not quite, perhaps, rivaling the rose, but enthralling fully as devoted, if not as large a public. In America some *auriculas* are grown as greenhouse flowers, others for the rock garden or herbaceous border, but never with sensational success.

Climate may have done much to cool our enthusiasm, for there are few localities in this land where primroses of any kind could be grown far and wide in every dooryard, as they are in the British Isles. And the *auricula* is a super-primrose, bringing with its special beauties particular difficulties. Nevertheless a wider popular understanding could bring with it more extensive cultivation of this group.

The author of *The Auricula* tells lucidly all that we need know about each race, its history, going back to the time when in northern Europe new varieties brought fantastic prices, its merits and show points, culture and genetic origin. Hybridists will be intrigued by the revelation of the singular manner in which parental colors have been not only recombined in the offspring, but actually superimposed as in no other flower, yielding an incomparable diversity of shades. The



breeding done in pre-Mendelian days has perhaps reached its limits and passed its peak of popularity, only now after the passage of centuries to be studied in the light of modern science and in some part understood.

Will new breeding methods now lead to fresh departures and a revival of interest? Sir Rowland Biffen not only poses the question, but has already carried out some promising preliminary experiments.

## THOUGHTS FROM LONDON

**T**HE recent International Conference, with its opportunities for exchange of ideas, brings to mind more than one problem in American horticulture still awaiting final solution. The co-ordination of the Royal Horticultural Society, the Alpine Garden Society and the Scottish Rock Garden Club, though hailed in Britain as something of an achievement, was in reality a logical and natural move, confronted with difficulties of tradition only. The huge membership and financial strength of the Royal Horticultural Society have made it inevitably the horticultural center not only of Britain, but to a certain extent, of the world. There has been a tendency for struggling societies to group themselves under the protecting wing of the R. H. S., to the benefit of all concerned.

The advantage of such an alliance has been felt on this side of the Atlantic, and definite moves have been made toward forming it. But here natural forces work against centralization. Our national plant societies find themselves dividing into regional groups in order to function for the benefit of their members. Reluctantly we are obliged to admit that the vast area of America has its disadvantages.

London is the center of a compact group of islands with a climate remarkable for its uniformity rather than its diversity. No matter how racial or political groups may strain apart, there is horticultural unity, because in the main the same plants will thrive from one end of the archipelago to the other, and because from anywhere to London is less than 500 miles.

For all our habit of organizing national societies, we have no such actual unity. There is no one horticultural center. The plant-minded in Seattle and New Orleans do not habitually travel to New York with their problems, and if they did, would hardly be understood. Nor do Nome, Denver and Miami find much in common.

Moreover, even while we insist that Europe needs a larger free-trade area to build up prosperity comparable to ours, many American states, in defiance to our Constitution are imposing trade restrictions thinly disguised as quarantines and license fees. Horticulture seems to insist on being local.

Even in the regions of comparatively uniform climate, we have nothing to compare with the British centralization. The air-line distance between Boston and Philadelphia is less than 250 miles, yet each spring, a week apart, flower shows of nearly equal importance are held in Philadelphia, New York and Boston. This is as it should be, but because there are three instead of one, none of our shows can compare with those in London.

Not only does the Royal Horticultural Society draw its exhibits from a much larger group of gardening public than do any of our organizations, it has also been able to build superior quarters in which to stage the shows. The important matter of lighting is especially noticeable, for with artificial illumination or insufficient daylight, subtle shades of color lose their true values. The glass roofs of the Royal Horticultural Society admit daylight in abundance, under which flowers can be seen as they actually are.

## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST TO ROCK GARDENERS

**A**T the annual meeting, Mr. Clarence McK. Lewis urged that in the future the Bulletin, instead of looking for original contributions, should devote its pages to reprints of significant and authoritative writings. While this suggestion undoubtedly has merit, it has not met with general approval on the part of the officers of the Society, but will be brought up later for further consideration.

Meanwhile the editor will attempt to keep a weather eye on current periodicals where articles on rock gardening are likely to appear, and when such are significant, review them briefly or in as much detail as they seem to deserve. The editor's only weather eye, however, has seen better days, and his regular reading includes no great number of periodicals. Would two or three members who are able to read more widely, volunteer to send in notice of the appearance of such material and perhaps help review it?

The publications of The Alpine Garden Society and The Scottish Rock Garden Club are out of bounds in this connection, because their contents are of interest per se and in toto, and because also they are procurable at very low subscription rates, as members can see for themselves by turning to the last page of this issue.

The May-June number of The Garden Journal of the New York Botanical Garden contains an almost lyrical invitation by Louis P. Politi to visit the Thompson Memorial Rock Garden, with a discussion of the nature of alpine plants, so phrased that the general public should not only understand it, but be persuaded as well to accept the invitation.

In Horticulture for June, one of our esteemed members, Richard C. Harlow, offered "My Favorite Rock Plants", of which Mr. Lewis writes, "...while it is purely an outpouring of rock garden enthusiasm, and isn't in any way technical or specialized, it is, I think, of a character that would interest almost any other enthusiastic rock gardener." The editor has not seen this article, something untoward having happened to his copy. Mr. Harlow has promised us an article telling what he knows about gentians, and that is a great deal. Perhaps he will head it "Gentians My Deer Prefer".

While waiting for more news of articles in contemporary publications, it might be well to glance at the present status of established rock garden literature. With some of the older favorite works going out of print, those of Reginald Farrer remain with us in new editions—an intimation of immortality? Surely no writer on horticulture has ever brought forth such a wealth of vivid phrases, playfully coined words and infectious enthusiasm.

My Rock Garden, a little book of a mere 300 pages, came out in 1907, electrifying the rock garden fraternity and bringing thousands of new zealots under its banner. The twelfth printing came out in 1949, and no doubt the thirteenth will soon appear. For this book re-reads with all the fascination of fiction, so delightfully is it written. Anyone who could peruse its pages without reaching for a rock and a trowel simply isn't human.

On the Eaves of the World and The Rainbow Bridge are travelogues of plant hunting, for Farrer could not wait in the confines of his own garden while untrodden mountain ranges remained to be conquered. And his journeys too live on in memory, enlivened by sly humor and starred with horticultural discoveries of real moment, each dramatized with unflinching mastery.

How a grower of everything and an inveterate explorer, while bringing out these little masterpieces of prose, could also have found time in his short life to complete a thousand-page compendium, The English Rock Garden, is one of those mysteries that never can be solved. In this Farrer described and evaluated alpinists



as no one before or since has done. In 1937 Dr. Sampson Clay published his *The Present Day Rock Garden*, 681 pages, to bring Farrer up to date, for before *The English Rock Garden* had appeared in 1919, its author had perished in the shadow of the Himalayas. A most useful work is Dr. Clay's too, full of good sense and an embracing knowledge of botany. Yet significantly, his book is already out of print, while Farrer's had a seventh printing in 1948, available to anyone who will lay down 4 pounds 10 shillings.

So universally has Farrer's influence been felt, that it is doubtful whether rock gardening as it is known today would have gained public support without him. It may safely be guessed that every modern writer on the subject sleeps with a copy of Farrer under the pillow.

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This Society, founded in 1930, has well over a hundred members in North America. As distance prevents their taking part in the Society's other activities, it is obvious that they have found the Quarterly bulletin to be good value for their subscriptions.

Further particulars regarding the Alpine Garden Society may be obtained from the Secretary, C. B. Saunders, Husseys, Green Street Green, Farnborough, Kent or, better, from Mr. C. R. Worth, Groton, New York, who is one of the Society's Ass't. Hon. Secretaries (foreign).

---

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