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Cover Picture *Aruncus aethusifolius* — Alan P. Slack, Media, Pennsylvania

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Astilbes For Summer Bloom

Mrs. Ralph Cannon

Chicago, Illinois

Photographs by H. Lincoln Foster

If you admire plants for their individual characteristics you will grow astilbes in your garden. They are beautiful as foliage plants and their flowers are among the loveliest. They blossom from June through August, filling the landscape with feathery spires of bloom for many weeks in summer. They are beautiful in colonies, as companions to other plants, or as solitary exclamation points, and they associate and blend well with other plants in the open, somewhat shaded garden or in a woodland setting.

When using a single plant both its position and background should be carefully chosen as should its companions. A singleton should be seen from all sides so that its foliage, growth pattern and in-

florescence can be appreciated. One isolated astilbe will give particularly rewarding results if it is planted against a background of contrasting color among neighbors with bold leafage as a foil for its ferny, much dissected leaves. A single plant thus treated can be so attractive that usually more than one will eventually be scattered through the garden.

On the other hand, astilbes in large groups will give a different effect, particularly when foaming with their feathery plumes of many small flowers.

If you decide to grow astilbes, choose a place in light shade, with soil rich in humus and leaf mold and ample moisture, but good drainage. You will find they are reasonably happy in full sun (if

kept moist), or dappled shade, but do not do their best in dense shade. Moisture and semi-shade are the keynotes for success. When planting the larger standard clones and species in colonies allow about eighteen inches of space for each plant so they may achieve their full development. Drifts of the miniature clones need far less space per plant: eight to twelve inches apart should be sufficient.

Astilbes need very little care unless they become exceedingly dry in which case they may become subject to attacks from red spider mites. Such attacks may be controlled by a brief, forceful spray of cold water every week or so, but it is easier to prevent red spider than to cure it.

As astilbes are heavy feeders, they should be given an annual spring dressing of compost, well rotted manure, or good garden fertilizer, though they perform satisfactorily with only a natural mulch of fallen leaves. As their root systems are very shallow, a mulch will prevent heaving in winter and excessive drying in summer. Planting them near a large stone will often ensure that the roots have enough moisture in dry weather.

Though astilbes can be grown from spring sown seed and do, indeed, self sow in suitable locations, they are, perhaps, most satisfactorily propagated by division of the roots as they hybridize freely in gardens and plants grown from seed are unlikely to come true. The beautiful named cultivars must, of course, be propagated vegetatively if they are to be true to name. Indeed, since astilbes make quite heavy and tight fibrous root clumps, they are benefited by division every three to four years to keep the plants vigorous and floriferous. Division is not difficult if a strong, sharp knife is used. It is best done in early spring in cold regions and in either spring or fall in warmer areas. However, with

their fibrous root systems it is possible to move plants at any time, even while in flower, provided they are well watered after replanting.

Astilbes are herbaceous perennials belonging to the Saxifrage Family. They are upright, bushy plants of mostly medium to tall heights. They almost always have two-to-three-alternately-compound, dark green, fern-like leaves having toothed or cut leaflets and panicles of showy flowers in shades of white, pink, lilac-red or crimson. Each small flower has two to three pistils and eight to ten stamens. The majority of astilbes are too large for the average rock garden, but are ideal for woodlands or sited close to water. There are, however, a few species and clones delicate and small enough to feature in the lightly shaded rock garden.

There are many species, mostly from Eastern Asia, but, because of the propensity of astilbes to hybridize and because of the many years of purposeful hybridization and selection, true species are almost impossible to obtain and plants listed in most catalogs are of hybrid origin of confused or unknown parentage. These hybrid clones, though frequently incorrectly named, are, however, extremely beautiful. Let us, however, list and describe briefly the species, difficult as most are to obtain.

Among the taller species best suited to the large shaded or waterside garden are *A. rivularis*, blooming in July, with spiky, but large panicles of flowers that range from yellowish white to reddish on four foot stems; *A. davidii*, a robust plant from China, whose rose-purple flowers in tight clusters on slender upright branchlets form a narrow panicle up to two feet long on stems reaching six feet or more; *A. grandis* with creamy white panicles of three feet on stems up to six feet.

Of the medium high astilbes, *A.*

japonica is, perhaps, the best known. It has been used extensively in hybridizing and is one of the parents of the many *Astilbe* x *rosea* crosses sometimes listed as *Astilbe* x *hybrida*. The true species has pure white flowers in rather loose panicles on stems from one to two feet tall and blooms very early in the spring. An attractive form or hybrid named *A. j. variegata* has yellow variegated leaves, while another, *A. j. foliis purpureis* has purple leaves and stems.

Astilbe astilboides, another Japanese species, sometimes incorrectly listed as *Spirea astilboides* or *Aruncus astilboides*, grows to three feet and has dense, heavy clusters of flowers. *Astilbe thunbergii*, also from Japan, is about eighteen inches tall with thick pyramidal clusters of blossom. A superior miniature clone, supposedly a form of *A. thunbergii*, available from a few Western mail order nurseries, is *A. thunbergii* 'Fujisanensis'. It is a delightful little plant about ten inches tall and well worth seeking out for the lightly shaded rock garden.

Astilbe biternata and the dubiously distinct *A. crenatiloba* are the only species of this genus to be found outside of Asia. These North American natives grow from Virginia south to Georgia and west to Tennessee. They are coarse plants (known colloquially as False Goats-beard) with rather thin panicles of yellowish white flowers held atop stems from two to three feet tall. Though this is one of the few true species readily available (from Eastern American wildflower nurseries), they are hardly worth growing, unless a particularly good form with larger, heavier panicles of blossom can be obtained.

Astilbe koreana has very ferny foliage. Its flowers are rose-pink in bud turning to creamy white as they open and are produced in loose panicles on arching stems about two feet high. This is one of the



Astilbe thunbergii 'Fujisanensis'

few astilbes with arching rather than stiffly upright flowering stems, a characteristic it frequently passes on to its hybrid offspring.

Astilbe rubra, from India, is also two feet tall and has dense panicles of rose flowers. *Astilbe taquetii* is a rigid, robust plant from two to three feet tall with bright reddish lilac flowers in a narrow spike twelve to fifteen inches long. A plant sometimes known in the trade as *A. 'Taquetii'*, supposedly a cross between a dwarf form of *A. davidii* and *A. simplicifolia*, is also known as the 'Star Astilbe' because of its white star-like flowers in panicles twelve inches tall.

Astilbe chinensis, growing from eighteen inches to three feet tall, has somewhat fluffier, much shorter panicles of blossom than *A. taquetii*. These are white flushed with rose or purple. It has a dwarf form, quite frequently seen in moist or shaded rock gardens, *A. c. pumilla*, which makes fairly large but flattened mats of much dissected leaves

above which rise rather short, stiff flower spikes on six to twelve inch stems. These blossoms are the most extraordinary fluorescent color, which can only be described as rosy pink frosted with bluish lavender. This variety usually does not open until mid-August or even later. A fairly rapid spreader, *A. c. pumilla* is one of the few true species readily available, perhaps because it blooms after most of the other astilbes have finished flowering and they are therefore less likely to cross with others in the garden. It will, indeed, self sow true to form in suitable locations.

Astilbe simplicifolia, possibly the smallest species in the genus, can also occasionally be obtained true to name. It, too, is a late bloomer. Its leaves are as glossy as well polished leather and are deeply lobed and toothed, but not divided to the

midrib. Its sprays of small white to pale pink flowers are on stems from six to twelve inches long. These are not as dense and showy as in the panicles of some species, but this small astilbe is worth growing for its muffin of shining leaves. Hybrids and forms of this delightful little plant are much to be sought. Many have very lacy foliage and feathery plumes of blossom. *Astilbe simplicifolia alba* has pure white flowers, while those of *A. s. rosea* are a rich pink. A possible hybrid of *Astilbe simplicifolia* is 'William Buchanan' of Scotch origin, with creamy white flowers on nine inch stems over a neat compact bushlet of crimson tinted, much dissected leaves. 'Sprite' is another charming hybrid with beautiful foliage and white flowers barely tinted with pink.



Astilbe simplicifolia



Astilbe simplicifolia x glaberrima

Another delightful little astilbe, usually listed as *Astilbe glaberrima* or *A. g.* 'Saxatilis' or *A. g.* 'Saxosa', should, according to Will Ingwersen, more properly be named *Astilbe japonica terrestris*. By whatever name and parentage, it is a perfect miniature from Japan, an elegant little plant with very cut, stiff foliage of an almost metallic sheen, frequently bronzed, and carries neat six inch sprays of pale pink or creamy flowers on three to six inch stems. It is, in addition, one of the parents of a number of very attractive; small hybrid clones.

Astilbe crispa should more correctly be listed as *Astilbe x crispa* as this group of plants are all of hybrid origin. They all have restricted, much cut, stiff foliage and (usually) short, stocky spikes of flowers on six to eight inch stems in late summer. 'Gnome', 'Kobold', 'Peter Pan', 'Perkeo', and 'Plumet', with flowers ranging in color from white to deep pink, are among the names clones.

In the late 19th and early 20th Centuries two growers, LeMoine in France

and Arends in Ronsdorf, Germany did extensive hybridizing of astilbes, giving rise to the *A. x lemoinei* and *A. x arendsii* hybrids. Since then many further crosses have been made (particularly in Holland and Germany) so that the list of named clones is now quite extensive. Only a few of these tall to medium high cultivars are listed here. Giving bloom from early spring to mid-August are whites: 'Deutschland', 'Snowcloud', 'Gladstone', and 'Bridal Veil'; among the pinks: 'Queen Alexandra', deep pink; 'Gloria Superba', rose pink; 'Peach Blossom', pale peach pink; 'June', deep rose; and 'Atro-Rosea', rose-madder flowers on red stems. Some of the reds and crimsons are 'William Reeves' with dark crimson flowers and bronzed foliage; 'Feuer', deep crimson; 'Fanal', deep garnet with red bronze foliage; 'Red Sentinel', rich red flowers that glisten as if sprinkled with frost crystals; 'Bremen', dark crimson flowers on short stems; 'Etna', bright crimson red; and 'Koblenz' with glowing light red blossoms.

Though the delightful and easily grown astilbes are mostly available only as hybrids and are frequently rather



Astilbe x crispa 'Gnome'

muddled as to nomenclature, they are all valuable additions to any garden with a modicum of shade or moisture, and when particularly attractive clones are found these should be treasured, divided and shared with other gardeners. Though the medium tall and tall astilbes

have been much worked on, there is still ample opportunity among rock garden buffs to do some pollen dabbling among the smaller astilbes and perhaps increase the supply of these irresistible and rewarding plants, which bring mid and late summer bloom to the rock garden. §

***Aruncus aethusifolius* (Lev.) Nakai: How It Got Here**

Dr. Richard W. Lighty
Newark, Delaware

Since 1967, a small herbaceous perennial with cream colored flowers and elegant, fern-like foliage has been circulating among rock gardeners under a variety of names. It has been well-accepted, but the doubts as to its identity have greatly confused those who grow and distribute it.

I first saw the plant in July of 1966 when Dr. Edward Corbett and I were exploring South Korea for ornamental plants under the sponsorship of Longwood Gardens and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We were on our first trip into the countryside, to the large island called Cheju-do, off the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. Cheju-do is a volcanic island dominated by the beautiful Mount Halla, a broad and serene-looking peak rising over a mile from the almost sub-tropical shores. The serenity belies the rugged character of the last few hundred meters below the rocky rim of the now-dead chaldera. It was during our steep ascent of that rim that we dis-

covered and photographed *Aruncus aethusifolius* in full bloom. It was growing with other coarse herbs and *Aquilegia oxysepala* at about 1800 meters in a site where one could stand erect only with difficulty. We did not collect it at the time, partially because we expected to be back when it might be in ripe fruit and partially because we were primarily interested in woody plants. Every live plant that added to our load would hinder our collection of plants more likely to be of commercial importance in the United States.

Fortunately we did come back in autumn, and there amidst the flaming foliage of *Rhododendron mucronulatum*, *Acer*, *Betula* and others, we found the plants as we had left them — but in full fruit.

Back in the United States, I picked up three small plants the next spring and planted them in three sites at our home. They all grew and thrived. A year later I divided them and made larger plantings in several locations. Again — they all grew. Clearly we had a tough plant on our hands. When I get such a plant, my first thought is “would it make a good low-maintenance groundcover?” So at

Dr. Lighty is in charge of the Longwood Program in Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Delaware.

the earliest opportunity I planted a square yard in clay soil in the sun and another square yard in a more loamy soil in the shade. The sun planting did magnificently. It was an excellent groundcover. That planting is still thriving. I've divided several of those plants; others I haven't touched in twelve years, and still no decline.

The area looks like a coarse moss or a fine fern. The dark green foliage tops out in the sun at about ten inches and the creamy-white flowers are borne eight to ten inches above that. The inflorescence is like a miniature goats beard (*Aruncus sylvester*). Incidentally, the planting in the shade has persisted, but performs less vigorously than that in the sun. What a bonus: a good deciduous sun ground-

cover. I'm presently using it in larger areas and detect real potential for commercial use because of its reliability. Its season of interest extends into winter when the red-brown seed heads thrust through the snow to provide memories of the past summer and promises of the coming spring.

I am indebted to Dr. William J. Dress of the L. H. Bailey Hortorium at Cornell University for clarifying the nomenclature and confirming that this plant is definitely not an *Astilbe*. There are some who are distributing or selling this plant as a member of that genus.

Incidentally, Dr. Dress tells me that the Bailey Hortorium had one specimen, collected in Korea in 1938. §

Astilbe microphylla

Dr. Lighty's article about *Aruncus aethusifolius* and the letter to him from Dr. Dress still leave in question the validity of the species *Astilbe microphylla* (despite its mention in Ohwi's *Flora Japonica*) and whether it is in cultivation in the United States. It is under the pseudonym *Astilbe microphylla* that *Aruncus aethusifolius* is listed by several English and American growers. According to Dr. William Dress's letter "*Astilbe* leaves are stipulate and the fruit are generally bicarpellate, the two carpels joined at the base to form a capsule. In the *Aruncus* the leaves are without stipules and the fruits consist of generally three separate carpels. *Astilbe* belongs to the Saxifragaceae, *Aruncus* to the Rosaceae."

Could any of our readers *who really know* give us information on the true *Astilbe microphylla*? Is it a valid species and, if so, what does it look like, where does it grow in the wild and is it in cultivation?



A Garden For Urchins

Frederick McGourty
Norfolk, Connecticut

When a neighbor's little girl lost her St. Bernard in one of our borders some distance from the kitchen, we knew something had to be done. Gardens, like closets, have a way of attracting clutter, and ours is no exception. Each year my wife and I resolve to cut down on the number and variety of plants we grow, but by February the laudable aim is on the wane as the seed packets begin to appear in the mail.

The trouble is, there are a great number of very fine plants in this world, but garden space is limited, and our own time usually more so. We may very well have on hand all of the ingredients for a pleasing garden, but the plants don't always come together for their best display or for the unity of the garden. In the process of crowding, which a friend calls sardine-tin horticulture, some excellent plants get buried, often literally, and we never learn the meritorious (or, confess it, occasionally rotten) traits of everything we grow. Possession of a plant does not necessarily imply knowledge of it. Even quite good gardens tend to have their share of wasted plants, the latter being overshadowed by some attractive natural or landscape feature or a few striking plant combinations.

A couple of years ago when it became

Frederick McGourty is editor of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden Handbooks.

clear that our garden was developing a mind of its own, and a rather balky one at that, I decided to take corrective measures. A quick look around the borderlands disclosed a number of plants that had no business being in our garden. Many were aggressors, and none had heard of the Helsinki Accords. To the astonishment of wife and anguished cries from plant-collector friends, I carted truckloads of greedy gaillardias, invasive inulas and lustful lysimachias to the village dump, fearing that if I consigned them to the compost heap, they would by hook, crook, or root work their way back to the garden. To all my acquaintances I bellowed, "The only good galium is a dead galium!" Quietly, they said to each other, "Save the scutellaria. He'll come to his senses soon."

The Softening Process

The clean-up continued, and upon peeling off several layers of garden I began to find an occasional, rather attractive little runt, albeit scrawny and malnourished, lurking in the underbrush. One couldn't very well leave it there, for the forest would no doubt return someday when I wasn't looking. And as 'enry 'iggins, looking at Eliza Doolittle for the first time, might have said, "This young damsel has potentialities!" So began my garden for urchins.

But how to evaluate them, how to

bring out their best qualities? Plantings in the ground often become more permanent than the gardener intends, and it didn't seem time yet to cast the urchins in stone; they hadn't even been de-thrippped. To be sure, plants in containers receive much more attention, especially if they are on steps near a frequently used entrance such as a back door, since they constantly provide a sense of guilt if they are not tended. No person passing by a gasping astilbe ten times a day can avoid the temptation to water. Faucets are also nearby, which is not always the case in the borderlands.

The trouble is, the traditional clay and newer black plastic Zam type of pots are not particularly attractive. Although some of my earliest memories are of a large greenhouse that my mother had, I for some reason never developed a sentimental regard for gatherings of pots of individual plants. They have struck me as being rather dull and without design, if utilitarian, and when I eventually started my own garden I avoided them in the way that rock gardeners shy from catalpas. They were simply not for me, nor are they now.

There is in fact a wonderful range of containers on the market, and I developed an interest in those with a wide diameter, so that several plants might be inserted and provide some sort of group display but not a miniature garden. We are not jardiniere gardeners, and redwood tubs, at least on the scale to which I am accustomed to garden, are beyond our means. As a pragmatist, with a bottom to my pocket, I have not been above begging an occasional bushel basket from the greengrocer or combing the housewares division of a discount store for dull brown plastic dish tubs with admirable diameter, the bottoms of which containers I then perforate with an ice pick so they will drain properly. Wife and friends utter a plaintive sigh when I come

home from a raid, and my landscape architect, if I were to have one, would scream in horror.

Partners

The growing of plants has always struck me as an aesthetic pursuit, one in which the aim is to get visually — not to mention culturally — compatible partners together and see what happens. In this regard flower color associations play a role, as do the combinations of different floral shapes. Most important, however, is the contrast of foliage, *e.g.*, light and dark, coarse and refined. The reason for this, obviously, is that we live with the foliage through the entire growing season, whereas flowers last usually but two or three weeks. The interesting contrast of certain plant shapes, or growth habits, is another consideration.

With these thoughts in mind, I gradually rounded up my urchins and grouped them on the ground by height and foliage textures. As a rule, and of course depending on plant and container size, I put three plants of one species into a container with three of another. The soil mix, such as it was, was well composted sod and sandy leaf mold, to which several handfuls of peat moss, a dash of dolomitic limestone and a tablespoon of Osmocote were added per container. This slow-release fertilizer, used in modest quantities to compensate (and then some) for the leaching of nutrients which occurs due to frequent waterings, is a wonderful development for both plants and gardeners, for it provides an even flow of nourishment at no expense of labor apart from the initial input.

The little urchins thrived, and I came to the conclusion that most, indeed, could be good garden plants, but were just victims of circumstance, trapped and overlooked in a large garden, little fish caught among the barracudas, so to speak. For visitors, at least, they seemed

to hold more interest than petunias, and even my wife and old plant-collector friends gave an approving, if grudging nod. For the smallest plants I used the king size of seedling plastic trays (7 inches \times 16 inches \times 2½ inches), which are shallow and inconspicuous, as a good container should be. Larger plants took pot luck, which as often as not was a rather aged wooden tub with fifteen inch diameter. Around the time when leaves fall from the trees in autumn, I would depot plants and put them into the ground for winter, then give them a layer of pine boughs in early December after the soil had frozen. In a few instances we would put trays in the cold frame. Losses have been quite small.

Some Sweets, Love

Here are a few combinations with the reclaimed ones: *Astilbe x crispa* 'Perkeo' surrounding *Polygonatum humile* (*P. falcatum* of rock gardeners). This half pint of an astilbe, with attractive but fleeting pink flowers in summer, is a season-long tactile treat because of its lacy but surprisingly rigid foliage. Don't let the neighborhood kids pet it too often. The polygonatum is a nine-inch-tall, stoloniferous solomon's-seal with sculptured foliage that reminds one slightly of false-hellebore (*Veratrum*). Shade is needed.

Aruncus aethusifolius with *Ajuga* 'Metallica Crispa' in the fore. The little Korean goatsbeard looks remarkably similar to an astilbe but has even more feathery leaves. The floral effectiveness is prolonged because the tiny white blossoms are succeeded by cinnamon-colored seed pods that draw the eye repeatedly. The ajuga, a non-running kind, forms an asymmetrical, congested clump of deep green, savoyed leaves that develop a purplish tint as summer progresses. Flowers are incidental. Shade is beneficial.

Astilbe glaberrima 'Saxosa' (*saxatilis* of American rock gardeners) with *Alchemilla erythropoda*. The former, one of the smallest astilbes, has quite transient light pink flowers in summer, the customary handsome foliage of the dwarf sorts, and a none-too-robust constitution. ('Williamn Buchanan', with white flowers, is a better grower and has foliage as refined.) The latter, a diminutive lady's mantle with leaves only an inch and a half or two inches wide, forms a tidy light green clump. Its greenish-yellow flowers in late spring are of little account but to the plant. This alchemilla is used effectively in the crevices of a flagstone walk at Sissinghurst. Partial shade is desirable for the combination.

Disporum sessile 'Variegatum', surrounded in a planting tub by *Asarum europaeum*. The first, a plant derived from a Japanese woodlander, can grow eighteen inches tall and form an impressive little colony, as it does in a shaded section of the rock garden at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. However, in central New England the winters provide undue stress for this handsomely variegated fairy-bells, which is one of the last herbaceous plants to start growth in spring. Performance in a container is better than in the ground, and the subtle attributes of the plant, including flowers which are even variegated, followed by long-lasting blue-black fruit, become evident. The beauty of the foliage, clean green-and-cream spears, is accentuated by the leathery, deep green, rounded leaves of the European-ginger, which serves as a skirt. Shade, of course.

Potentilla tonguei, with *Molinia caerulea* 'Variegata' in the center of a planting tub. The former, a strong-growing trailer with apricot-colored blossoms, flowering sporadically through summer, seems to come to its best here in morning sun and light afternoon shade. The molinia, an ornamental grass with re-

fined white stripes, eventually becomes too large for a fifteen-inch container except as a solo, but it is a very slow grower for its first two or three years and is adapted to our purpose. I prefer it to variegated oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius* 'Variegatum'), which frequently looks worse for wear as summer progresses, and to *Carex conica* 'Variegata', a neat diminutive sedge which would consort better with *Ajuga* 'Metallica Crispa' or other plants with small blocky foliage.

Our container combinations are not by any means restricted to rock garden plants, and luck of the season plays its role. For example, in midsummer one year I bought from a garden center a discounted, left-over tray of purple-leaved fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare purpureum*). This can be a splendid plant, with a unique misty texture because of its threadlike maroon foliage. In one of our borderlands there happened to be a

small army of seedlings of one of the variegated European hawkweeds, probably *Hieracium waldsteinii*, with light gray leaves and brownish-mauve markings. We decided to combine the two in a ten-inch container. The fennel is a short-lived but rampageous perennial which can do a considerable amount of damage to a border if it is not well attended by the gardener, but container growth kept it restricted to a foot in height, at the same time restraining the hawkweed. The combination was attractive on our back porch until Thanksgiving. Sometimes it helps to think of a container as a straitjacket.

Oh yes, the St. Bernard mentioned in the first paragraph of this article. We sent a scottie into the border with a little cask of brandy, and after a few hours he ushered out the red-eyed saint, to the delight of the little girl and me. §

Hold It

Don't throw away that pan of ungerminated seed! Many seeds take two or three years to germinate. Natives such as trillium and our emblematical dodecatheon are timid beginners. I have frequently had campanula germinate the first year and, in untouched seed pans of the tiny varieties, more germination occurred the second year. The same experience can be had with primulas and saxifrages. Sneaky little devils like the cyclamen do their first birthing action in the soil, and you don't see leaves until later.

Androsaces are particularly prone to delayed germination. The other day I was looking at a seed pan of *A. vandellii* planted two years previously and admiring a single bloom on a tiny year-old seedling — beside which were several brand new seedlings with only their cotyledons showing. A rule of mine is to discard ungerminated seed pans only after the third year. I guess we must conclude that impatience is not a horticultural virtue.

— Alan Slack. Reprinted from the Dodecatheon, newsletter of the Delaware Valley Chapter

Penstemons and Other Westerners In Troughs

Part III — Other Westerners

Mark McDonough
Norwood, Massachusetts
Drawing by Sukii Saito McDonough

A trough cannot live by penstemons alone or can it? Troughs usually look their best if several genera are combined to give variety of floral display and foliage texture. And what better companions for penstemons than some of the other Western American plants. I have already mentioned in Part I *Eriogonum caespitosum*, but I would like to include here at least one other member of that genus.

Eriogonum umbellatum

Eriogonum umbellatum is a reliable performer here in Massachusetts, standing up surprisingly well to cold wet weather. This dwarf spreading shrub with leathery leaves is attractive in all seasons. Fuzzy, bright yellow pompons on slender scapes put on a good show in early summer. The dwarf forms of this variable complex offered by Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery are all choice, but have never stayed with me very long. The small eriogonums are among the most desirable dwarf shrubs for the trough.

Erigeron

The genus *Erigeron* suffers the same neglect as do the penstemons, with only a few species represented in cultivation. One good species for the trough or rock

garden is *E. poliospermus*. At its best this is a neat dwarf with rich purple to blue flowers on short stems. Pallid, few-rayed to almost discoid specimens grow side by side with the more choice plants and this should serve as a warning to select only the best forms of each species.

I grow a pink flowered form of *E. compositus*, which is one of the nicest plants in the trough. Plants moderately seed around, which is welcome as older plants often turn crispy brown and die in mid-summer. The hairy, dissected leaves barely reach half an inch high and are evergreen, taking on rich purple tints during the winter months. Avoid the arrogant invading foot tall white flowered weeds that frequently come under this name.

Erigeron bloomeri, the Scabland Daisy, is an unusual "buttonhead" type that I collected in Washington. Even though the rays are absent, the bright yellow buttons over concise mounds of linear gray foliage are most attractive.

Erigeron elegantulus has short, narrow leaves forming miniature armeria-like tufts about one inch high. Flowers are blue or pink. *Erigeron clokeyi* is native to high elevations in California and is larger than the last with a loose tuft of long, narrow, grayish leaves and pink,

few-rayed flowers on four inch stems. *Erigeron linearis* is another of these dwarf grassy tufts with good yellow daisies on short stems. It is surprising that this is so seldom grown.

A favorite of mine is *E. filifolius*, yet another mound of filiform, hairy leaves with flowers of blue, pink or white. I grow a beautiful full petalled white variety from Nevada. Plants are short lived and best kept going by cuttings or seed. All of the erigerons described above are good trough plants.

Draba

For early spring bloom, it is hard to beat the yellow splash of color provided by *Draba incerta*. The flowers are a bright butter yellow on short stems over loose tufts of small leaves with stellate hairs. This is an alpine species native to Washington, western Canada and eastward to Wyoming, which flowers later than many other drabas. It occasionally self sows. There are many other Western American drabas; all make good trough plants.

Phoenicaulis cheiranthoides

Also of the Mustard Family is the showy *Phoenicaulis cheiranthoides*. Said to be perennial, plants usually behave as biennials in the garden. In the first year, flat rosettes of broad foliage, having stellate pubescence, appear. The second year, the plants elongate into many flowering stems, bearing showy clusters of rosy purple flowers. Like many of its kin, *Phoenicaulis cheiranthoides* grows rank after flowering with rather unattractive, long and narrow seed heads.

Talinum

For summer color in an arid trough, it is hard to beat the cheerful talinum, a genus of succulent perennial herbs of the Portulacaceae. Members of this group

are largely North American, however tender greenhouse species occur in Africa and Asia.

Talinum okanoganense is a miniature plant from the mountains of British Columbia and Washington and in my estimation one of the finest plants for the rock garden or trough. Short, semi-woody stems, bedecked with tiny beads for leaves, lie flat on the ground. On sunny days, very large goblets of silky white, each with a sunny tassel of stamens, look skyward, virtually stemless on the inconspicuous mat of grayish green leaves. Whenever I encounter a plant in bloom, I am amazed by the relatively huge size of the beautiful flowers. This is, perhaps, the largest flowered species within the genus. In late summer the plant goes dormant, leaving a few bare stems. In the open rock garden *Talinum okanoganense* is too easily overlooked or even lost by accidental digging. Planting in a trough is recommended; here its small proportions can be appreciated. Easily raised from seed or by cuttings taken in midsummer before it goes dormant, rooted cuttings will often forget about dormancy and grow and flower until fall.

Native to arid rocky soils in Washington, *T. spinescens* is a most distinctive summer bloomer. Small, succulent, finger-like foliage springs from a compressed woody caudex when warm weather arrives in spring. For many months magenta blossoms are carried on thin, wiry stems up to eight inches tall. When plants go dormant in late summer, the leaf midribs are persistent, leaving a hump of little spines until the fresh growth appears next spring. Here in New England the dormancy period seems totally confused: some plants have several complete cycles in one year, with the appearance and shedding of foliage determined by the availability of moisture rather than being dependent on the sea-

son. This and the last species can grow in pure sand, although they seem to flower better if given a bit of enrichment. *Talinum spinescens* can be propagated by slicing the woody tap root and rehabilitating it in moist sand.

In the past few years *Talinum rugospermum* has been confused with *T. spinescens* in the seed lists. This plant is totally unlike *T. spinescens*, being a tumble of long succulent fingers sprouting from a few thickened trunks. All summer multitudes of very large magenta flowers appear on a tangle of wiry, threadlike stems up to a foot high. In autumn the plant dies back to a perennial stump. This is a showy species from the Central States.

Talinum parviflorum is a small species from Texas and Arizona. The succulent fingers make loose tufts only a few inches tall, surpassed by slender six inch stems, which bear small, pink flowers. Of similar value are *TT. calycinum*, *appalachianum*, *mengesii* and *teretifolium*. All will grow in the hottest spot in a trough, although they seed about too easily. The flowers only open for a few hours each afternoon and can be missed if the plants are not watched carefully.

Talinum aurantiacum is a desert species from Texas and Arizona. The fleeting, one inch flowers are coppery orange, a color uncommon among talinums. There are several other desirable dwarfs with good sized flowers found at fairly high altitudes in Mexico.

Calytridium umbellatum

Another member of the Portulacaceae is *Calytridium umbellatum* var. *caudicifera*, sometimes known as *Spraguea umbellata* or *S. multiceps*. This is a fascinating plant commonly known as Pussypaws, an allusion to the soft bunches of fluffy flowers. The flat rosettes of succulent, spathulate leaves are strongly dimpled and vary from silvery green to

dark olive green, with occasional leaves colored beet red. Thick flowering stems lie absolutely flat on the ground, radiating out from the tiny rosette, and produce at their tips dense clusters of papery white to pink flowers. A close inspection reveals that each fragrant, four-petaled flower is enveloped by two large, round sepals. These oversized sepals are persistent and are the same color as the flowers, eventually aging to deep ruddy pink tones. Older plants divide up into colonies of smaller rosettes and it is at this point that the quarter to half inch rosettes can be removed and rooted in a sandy medium.

I believe that the plant is rarely grown as it is reputed to be an annual. Most collected seed, however, is from the variety *caudicifera*, a name for the dwarf, perennial, alpine forms. The variety name *umbellatum* covers the lower altitude forms, which are taller, coarser annuals. In a dry, sunny trough, plants of *C.u.* var. *caudicifera* have lived for four years, flowering into winter. Occasional self sown seedlings appear.

Campanula piperi

One of the loveliest plants with which I have had success in a trough is *Campanula piperi*, a Washington endemic. The plant has taken several years to spread into a patch of small rosettes of sharply toothed, shiny green leaves. Each short leafy stem bears a few openly campanulate, upright bells of a good blue, highlighted with scarlet anthers. The mat grows between two large rocks in a raised sunny position. The only difficulty is in providing enough water during the hot summer months when some of the rosettes are lost to drought, though the plant revives when fall rains arrive. The deep reaching fleshy, white tap roots are not conducive to propagation, so seed is the surest method of increase. A well drained, but sunny position, is

best.

Allium

Allium geyeri is a nice pink flowered onion with six inch stems. Bulbs take several years to reach flowering size and, frankly, there are numerous other American onions that are far more attractive. Alliums provide good accents in a trough and are here safeguarded from mole attack.

Oenothera

The evening primroses are often very dwarf and large flowered, but the foliage is rather coarse. *Oenothera deltoides* var. *piperi* is small enough for the trough, although short lived. Flat rosettes of softly hairy, toothed, lanceolate leaves eventually build up into a large four inch high mound. The buds are covered with soft hair and open into large, white flowers. My plant died shortly after flowering.

I grew plants from seed labeled *Oe. brachycarpa*, but information on this species is scant and contradictory, so I'm not sure of its authenticity. Plants are definitely perennial with coarsely toothed basal foliage and immense three to four inch wide, soft yellow flowers, which, after sunset, miraculously spring open in seconds.

Astragalus shortianus

Of particular value and challenge to the rock gardener are the many American legumes such as *Oxytropis* and *Astragalus*. One that has been successful here is *A. shortianus*, a Rocky Mountain species. In a hot dry spot, the plant puts out beautiful silvery, pinnate leaves with large rounded leaflets. In some years the good sized, pink flowers on four inch stems appear, but in other years the plant refuses to bloom. Many other species from this immense family are being tried with varied success, but it

would be premature to report on them now.

Phlox

The next two genera that I'll discuss are carpeting plants of low stature and considerable appeal, all eminently suitable for the trough. The Western phlox are known for their difficulty, particularly on the East Coast. *Phlox caespitosa* is one of the most reliable, forming a concise mound in many years. Flowering is inconsistent, being susceptible to spring rain and frosts. In some years conditions will be favorable and the tight mounds will be sprinkled with good, pure white flowers. The degree of acidity in the soil is supposed to affect the color of the blossoms, deepening to dark blue in acid soil.

Phlox diffusa in its various color forms and varieties are ideal for the trough, often taking on tortured shrublike characteristics in miniature proportions. The flowers rarely show in my garden.

Douglasia

More dependable for flowering are the douglasias, choice members of the Primulaceae. *Douglasia laevigata* makes huddled mats of stocky, pointed leaves that are a deep waxy green. Large, rich pink flowers with red eyes are abundant on three inch stems. Unfortunately, hot and humid weather is not to its liking and plants can quickly collapse during July and August. A rich scree in partial shade works best, ensuring greater longevity.

Douglasia montana is a delicate species with finer needles, looking much like a compact phlox. The flowers are much smaller and are light pink. This is a charming plant needing a position similar to the above, although established plants may suddenly dry up after flowering.

Douglasia nivalis has silvery, needle-like foliage, but thus far has refused to



*Sisyrrinchium
elmeri*

bloom for me. The plants suffer from summer heat, but usually recover during cooler autumn months. All douglasias make superb candidates for the trough garden.

Sisyrrinchium elmeri

A particularly delightful plant suitable for the trough is *Sisyrrinchium elmeri*. This is a small Californian that is more in-

teresting than showy. It has small, fan shaped leaf clusters typical of the genus, but only about three inches tall. Myriads of tiny yellow stars sit atop stems that just surpass the foliage, each flower with a brown ring in the throat. These open for only a few hours in early afternoon on sunny days. The seed capsules are the real attraction, appearing as bunches of small, bronzy red beads. Plants are mar-

ginally hardy here, but there is no need to fret as dense colonies of miniature iris-fans appear annually from the abundant seed.

Some Grasses

Of increasing popularity among rock gardeners are the grasses. When space in the trough is so precious it may seem odd to devote an area to growing grass, but the smaller types can add a "natural alpine turf" effect to an otherwise contrived arrangement. Of significant importance is that many plants show a symbiotic turf association and will benefit from growing in close contact with grasses that are not overly rampageous.

A fine plant to use in a trough is *Poa abbreviata*, a densely tufted grass native to the arctic tundra of Alaska and also having a scattered circumpolar distribution. In dry soil and full sun, *Poa abbreviata* forms a slowly spreading hummock of very narrow leaves little more than an inch high. In shaded, moister positions growth is laxer and more spreading, but the plant never becomes a nuisance. This is a choice, safe grass, which adds character to the small trough

landscape.

As with penstemons, I have touched only lightly on the wealth of North American plants that are compact enough to be grown in the trough, although I do include a few taller plants more suited to the open rock garden. The apparently random selection of species discussed is a result of reporting on plants with which I have had gardening experience. An unrelenting search for the lesser known plants reveals that many genera are poorly represented in gardens even though a large percentage of these are, in fact, readily accessible, a phenomenon that surprises our overseas gardening friends, many of whom are keen on North American plants. I, too, am surprised by this and will continue to search, as I hope you all will, to maintain in cultivation the seemingly endless variety of worthy native plants. Scour the seed lists for the occasional choice plant that may appear, correspond and exchange with friends, join various state native plant societies and, most importantly, go forth and seek out desirable plants to be grown and shared with others. §

Corrections

In the Spring issue, Vol. 40, No. 2, in the article "Penstemons and Other Westerners in Troughs" several mistakes have been called to my attention. On page 55, "*Penstemon ellipticus*" should read "*Penstemon ellipticus*." Also on page 55, "*menziesii*" in the boldface subheading, "*P. davidsonii* var. *menziesii*," should read "*menziesii*." On page 60, in the description of the leaves on *P. caryi* the word "channeless" should read "channeled." — Ed.

Inside The Dragon: Anatomy of A Study Weekend

By One Who Has Been There
Marvin Black
Seattle, Washington

The special mood music, flutes-harps-recorders, has been piped into the lecture hall for 25 minutes, setting an Alice in Wonderland atmosphere. Onstage, an eight-foot blue caterpillar lounges, preparing to smoke a hookah. The audience buzzes with anticipation and restlessness. Ten minutes late, but all 300 are in their seats. House lights dim, the chatter stops.

Suddenly the music becomes a shrill alarm clock blasting out of the darkness, followed by the lengthy tolling of Big Ben. Lights appear onstage, and a giant-eared March Hare with a gold clock on a chain hurries by . . . "I'm late . . . I'm late." Under an outsized top hat, an intent Mad Hatter crosses offstage, walks silently down the center aisle through the delegates, and disappears. The March Hare assumes the podium, begins a Lewis Carroll parody called "The Jubblerock": seven stanzas in all. Then "Welcome to Study Weekend Six!" And the audience roars its approval.

God and Reginald Farrer never decreed that Rock Garden Study Weekends be dull. In the West (I've not been to one in the East) each of ours has had a new site, a new committee, and its own distinct personality. We know more people will come, and keep coming back, if the weekends are first-rate entertainment as well as educational. And we're not above donning costumes, building caterpillars, filling exhibit halls

and taping hours of specially-grouped music to make our point.

Five months after our 1981 Study Weekend drew over 300 people, planning had begun in three cities with committees for upcoming weekends: Portland in 1982, San Mateo in 1983, and Port Townsend in 1984, to continue the traditions of the first six held in Washington and British Columbia. Inside those costumes and behind the scenes, small armies of real-life rock gardeners work a year or more to produce this entertainment, and the audience responds with standing ovations and enthusiastic thank-you notes. Here, from inside the dragon, is how a Study Weekend is created. The dragon may have twelve or more ribs.

Rib 1. The Basic Concept of Study Weekends. Study Weekends started in the East, and have continued there. The West copied this good idea beginning in 1974. Western sponsors include, besides American Rock Garden Society chapters, the Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia, and the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Society. It therefore isn't exclusively an ARGs event — we have held excellent Study Weekends in Vancouver and Victoria.

The event is a winter one for three reasons. It is a dormant season with less garden activity, people with nurseries can attend then, and winter doldrums

can give way to a gearing up for spring. It is reunion time with old friends and a time for meeting new people. It recharges the rock gardener's batteries with talks, exhibits, displays, discussion. Roy Davidson, who brought the idea West, is understandably pleased that his initiative has grown into a high point in the West Coast rock garden year.

Rib 2. The Atmosphere — “Where It's At”. Creative people can make this rib pay big dividends. It's relatively simple to book a big convention center and let their conference organizers do the work. Though some good conferences are done this way, a lot more bad ones are. To go back to Rib No. 1, the idea of meeting old and new friends, a mood of intimacy and personal touch helps. To book a conference center may be like inviting dinner guests to your home and having Howard Johnson's cater the dinner.

We've learned to seek out-of-the-way places where attendees (particularly those from nearby) are separated from their usual patterns, so they won't skip the final afternoon lecture to go home and stick the roast in the oven for dinner. One year we met on an island in Puget Sound and a surprise two-inch snowfall gave the illusion of 175 travelers snow-bound together for the weekend. In Victoria we gloried in the ornate grand ballroom of the old Empress Hotel. The 1981 weekend in a State of Washington conference facility was in a converted old fort. We ate excellent food, lodged in refurbished Victorian homes with fireplaces and brass beds, and savored the 1940's price tag.

Delegates heard fifteen talks, some given by overseas and out-of-state speakers, had a prime rib banquet with strolling musicians, plus five other meals and two nights lodging and a 64-page conference booklet. Their expenses

were \$69 for the entire package, and we made several thousand dollars profit. Some said people wouldn't come to out-of-city locations. It's simply not true if the price and the program are right. Such sites have much more atmosphere than in-city motels, though we've had good Study Weekends in those, too. Organizing ride-sharing schemes to get visitors from transportation terminals to out-of-the-way sites can be fun, involves more people. (*A site which can be reached by public transportation in case of inclement weather might be advisable in sections where winters are severe.* — Ed.)

Shop seriously for meeting sites. The lecture room must hold maximum anticipated attendance, which is becoming a problem as our attendance climbs yearly, though, a perfectly good Study Weekend could be planned for less than 100 people. But if your lecture room can only seat 150, you'll have a lot of angry people if 180 show up. The lecture room must darken for daytime slide showing. It's best to have a high-ceilinged room so the screen can be raised enough to be visible over the heads of twenty-seven rows of people or you'll hear from the lady in Row 28. Beware meeting rooms with cocktail lounges adjacent or, God forbid, underneath, as in one place we met. When the live music starts up and overwhelms your evening speaker, remember that they *won't* stop the music; they've paid for it.

Demand a working tryout of the sound system. It's amazing how many places have no employee who has any idea how the thing works, and in such places it often works badly indeed. The time to discover this isn't when the first speaker begins. Echoes are disasters in lecture rooms. Many, many meeting rooms have cheap, atrocious sound systems; will your people want to suffer all weekend with that? You might demand that the management import an accept-

able system or lower the rent to enable you to rent one. Don't sign anything until you've checked these things. Does a good projector and the sound system come as part of the rental, or will there be extra cost for these? There is at some places.

What does coffee service cost? Watch out, big conference centers often charge as much as \$1 per cup for coffee service. If you must have something with your coffee, get your cookie bakers busy — don't even ask the price. We've solved the whole problem in big hotels by having 30 minute breaks and informing the delegates that coffee is in the coffee shop down the hall.

Be hard-nosed. Bargain with the management over their facilities. Sometimes you'll get better rates. Always you'll get more respect. They may volunteer little free extras if they think you really may go elsewhere, for they need the business these days. Another pointer: it pays to be very upset the first time something they have promised goes wrong. Not nasty, but adamant. If you're timidly polite, many places will ignore your complaint — they probably have an unhappy conference on their hands elsewhere in the building. Be noisy the first time something goes wrong; very appreciative when they correct errors, and they'll treat you better.

Rib 3. The Program — Its Conceptual Organization. If the Study Weekend Program isn't any good, nothing else can save things. Think awhile before plunging ahead. Consider the options. A program might be arranged around a tight theme, such as "Alpines of the Americas," or "An Inventory of Asia's Alpines." Or it might develop elements of a single broad subject like "The Culture of Rock Plants," with talks on propagation, soils, alpine houses, rock garden design, etc., or "Great Rock Gar-

deners and Their Gardens." It could be assorted topics under a broad title like "Alice in Wonderland," which used the idea of miniature scale to carry many themes. "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory" might be heavy with slides, photography techniques, botanical illustration, the literature of rock gardening. "Tales Around a Winter Fire" dwelt on adventures, reminiscences, achievements. A clever or catchy theme can help sell the event. It won't rescue it if the program contents are weak.

Rib 4. The Meat of the Matter — Speakers and Their Talks. Rib 4 is crucial. We never choose more than 20% of our speakers from people we haven't found to be very listenable or that a well-trusted source can't so recommend. As between an expert-but-dull speaker (translate: "academic" with no leavening of humor or eloquence) and a novice-but-upbeat enthusiast, we'll gamble on the latter every time. West Coast audiences will forgive mediocre grammar, will accept the roughness of a dirt gardener, but they'll rebel against dullness no matter how knowledgeable the expert.

Avoid filling spots on the program with "We ought to have something on propagation; who could we ask to talk on that?" People assigned talks they wouldn't choose (particularly when they're dying to give a different talk) seldom add to the program.

If possible, have no key members of your committee deliver major talks. It is hard to do justice to the dual responsibility, and both the speaker and the audience will suffer. Early in our planning, we ask good local speakers to plan talks, then give them only light duties discharged some days before the speaking time. If your best speakers *must* be your key committee members, keep their talks short and invite more speakers from

outside.

We vary talk lengths so the program flow isn't monotonous. We use some talks as short as 15 minutes, with our longest talks one hour. Often a knowledgeable enthusiast on a narrow topic will deliver a super-talk when asked (far in advance) to produce their (usual 45 minute) talk in 20 minutes. The resulting 20 minutes represent careful editing by the speaker to produce the essence of the 45 minutes, and the audience is impressed.

Our average talk lasts 30 minutes, with some for 20, 25, 40 and 45. Only one or two speakers will be allowed an hour. When we have special outside speakers or outstanding local ones we often ask them to bring two talks, perhaps one of 30 minutes and another of 50 minutes, so that we can hear more of them. In general we rule out audience questions; they can destroy a time table. If you have generous breaks and time for socializing, the audience can meet the speakers one-to-one and get the answers they seek. Only if the program is running ahead of schedule, do we allow a few questions, but we limit these. People in show business learned long ago that you'll be a winner if you always leave audiences begging for more.

We once made the banquet speech the main address of the conference. We've discovered that a well fed and often well libated audience, at the end of a day of exciting talks, gets indigestion from a major evening talk. So now we seek lightness, often with humor, something offbeat or change-of-pace that need not have anything to do with rock gardening at all. The effect, like a light dessert, is usually just what people want.

Our audiences seem most comfortable with a mix of old-friend speakers they know and trust interlaced with a few new voices and faces.

And finally, each speaker is sent, in ad-

vance, an instruction sheet spelling out the ground rules.

Rib 5. Food and Lodging. Apart from a banquet, it is simplest to let your delegates arrange their own meals and housing — you merely hand them lists of available choices in the advance publicity. Include a map or directions to show where hotels and restaurants are located and your food and lodging program is solved. You escape the headaches of unannounced arrivals and last minute cancellations.

On the other hand it may be best to have as many delegates as possible under one roof, eating most of their meals together in a central location. This adds to your work-load, but provides a congenial atmosphere in which people from different areas can mingle and socialize between programmed talks.

Some conference centers will handle your event only if you'll guarantee a block of 75 or 100 rooms. You may wish to avoid this trap as you will be locked into bottom-line responsibility. You'll be held responsible (by the delegates) if things you can't control go wrong and your conference can lose a bundle if a sudden snow-fall hits, lots of people cancel, and you've guaranteed room rentals.

However, some conference centers, will reduce their room rates if you guarantee a minimum number of rooms and will even give a certain number of free rooms, including lecture hall, exhibit room, and a small meeting room for a fixed number of guaranteed room and meal reservations.

It's worth looking carefully into the options, do comparative shopping at a number of places, and be a hard-nosed bargainer.

Rib 6. Choosing Your Committee. We've developed a sneaky un-

derhanded approach to this that has something to do with the overall success of the weekend. Way ahead — 1-2-3 years, a few of us some night in a reckless mood say, “We ought to run a Study Weekend in (name a year).” In a few minutes, we’ve sold ourselves and start developing a few concept ideas; soon it’s down to assigning ourselves duties. Then this group of two to five people goes to the local chapter and announces, “We’ve got a great idea. We want to have the Northwest Chapter sponsor a Study Weekend in 1984, and we’ve already got a Committee started. Okay?” And the chapter has never turned us down — how do you refuse a group of people volunteering to do a job? Maybe it’s a Seattle exclusive, but the method works well. The alternative is too often to go before a very passive chapter membership and say “It’s been suggested that Our Chapter should host the 1984 Study Weekend. What do you think?” If you want to see the Story of the Little Red Hen personified, try this approach. “Not me, not me, not me!”, as those who don’t want to get involved proceed not to. We think that’s the wrong approach — those people shouldn’t be asked to vote, they should be told that a group is ready to undertake the task if allowed to.

However, if you’re on this steering committee, or have been elected General Chairman or some such omnipotency, choose carefully your co-leaders, selecting as much for temperament as for willingness or ability. Don’t ask timidly — *tell* your selected person that a group of you are planning the greatest of all Study Weekends with a very special group in charge and the one being asked is the *one person you really need* to do the job. If you are completely dedicated, already running hard, if you don’t make it easy to say “Oh, I don’t think so”, surprisingly few choices will turn you

down. The best people are most often the busiest, and you must engage them into this wonderful conspiracy before they have time to press the “busy” button. If you already know they’re overwhelmed by projects at hand, you shouldn’t choose them. We start with a smaller steering group of five or six key people and have that smaller group meet periodically up to about six months before the event, at which time we fill the committee up to ten or twelve chairmen, many of whom will then build their own committees of helpers. By Study Weekend time, we have our Small Army working. Lots of people are willing to work hard for a few weeks but not longer, so we choose this tactic.

A Production Manager is indispensable, but not often seen in Study Weekends. (Ours was also Budget Manager, but these could be separate jobs.) He monitored the budget we’d adopted and recommended, right up to the event, whether various proposals as they came up were affordable. He advance-checked all physical facilities. Lights — do they dim or go totally off? Can people see to write notes? Does the light on the speaker’s lectern blind the audience during slide shows? Is there a light on the speaker’s lectern or will flashlights be needed? Can the speaker control the slide projection from up front or must he/she always say “next slide”? Our PM found out where and how the heating was controlled, advance-planned which doors to open to bring cool air into an overheated (they always are) conference room. He tested the sound and projection systems’ capabilities, for he would be responsible for their running, and in a curtained room he’d check how well the curtains darkened the room (we had a windowless theater).

Together with the Program Chairman, the Production Manager worked out the weekend’s events on a detailed schedule

broken into five-minute segments, so at any moment both are aware of how nearly on schedule the timing is. He pre-taped special music for the beginning of each session and end of each break time and turned the music into the speaker system 15 minutes prior to each convening. He collected all slides from speakers a few hours before their talks and pre-viewed them rapidly in a back room so that all projected properly — we didn't show any upside-down slides. A general troubleshooter, hunting for anything that could go wrong and taking steps to prevent it, he made the weekend run like some fine-tuned machine, totally behind the scenes. He hired extra waitresses so the banquet could be served faster. He had spare projectors and projector bulbs on hand. A Production Manager must work miracles without becoming hysterical.

So must an Exhibits Manager. Ours measured the space in our Exhibit Hall, drew up maps showing table and display space, contacted each of the forty to fifty groups, nurseries, and individuals putting in displays. She allotted them space, negotiating whether it was to be wall space or a freestanding table, by the windows for live plant materials, and so forth. She recruited her committee of four to assist her, put in many long days, and produced the largest such show ever held at a Study Weekend. The exhibits at Study Weekends are an education and entertainment in themselves, often expanding on subjects covered in the talks. An Exhibits Manager, besides needing a sense of humor as she brings order from chaos, must be unflappable and able to run her Exhibit Hall with a firm and authoritative hand.

The event needs its own Registrar; ours was also Finance Chairman, making a gigantic combined responsibility. He kept the books, received all mail registrations and wrote out receipts, then

passed registrants' names and addresses to the Registration Chairman (the "Secretary" for the weekend), who mailed out the receipts and arranged the name tags. We were lucky: our Registration Chairman was an accomplished calligrapher. Her committee arranged the registration kits that all delegates picked up as they checked into the event. The kits contained all pertinent information about the event.

We had chairpersons for the Plant Sale and the Book Sale who formed committees and directed those events, working out regulations and space requirements. Since our sales occurred during coffee breaks and before lecture sessions, we reserved the best lecture hall seats for these volunteer workers, so they wouldn't be cheated. We had a separate sound system manager for the Exhibit Hall. A Photo Contest had its own managers, and we signed on a creative artist-type as Special Effects manager, arranging blue caterpillars, costuming, etc.

Our first Study Weekends were criticized because the schedule allowed little time for getting acquainted and viewing the exhibits, so we appointed a Friendship and Special Events Chairman, a creative person whose occupation involves many mixed group meetings. She suggested we expand the lunch hour to two hours, with options — hikes on short trails nearby, instruction in botanical sketching, a discussion group on butterfly plants. She suggested we ask people for short slogans to go on their name tags to help identify themselves, their likes, or their activities. These became conversation starters.

We had a Housing Chairman, a Program Chairman, and a Publicity Chairman, and we would suggest one more job we hadn't assigned: a Telephone Contact Person. Many people phoned in questions, often not knowing whom to



SATURDAY

- 6:55 Dining Hall open.
7:15 Banquet. Please be seated at this time.

Prime Rib Dinner

- 8:35 **"WHO STOLE MY TARTS? PLANTS?"**

Sharon Collman.

- 9:15-10:30 Exhibit Hall reopens.
Bar until 10:00.



SUNDAY

- 7:20-8:30 Breakfast, Dining Hall.
8:00 Exhibit Hall open.
Coffee Hour.
Plant and book sales.
8:40 *Country Auction* Marvin Black,
auctioneer. A chance to buy something special!
8:55 Theater open.
9:20 Dodo's Prizes.
9:25 SESSION FOUR: Kitty Pearson, moderator.



WINDFLOWERS. Dennis Thompson.

LITTLE TREASURES IN POTS. Sheila Maule

PROGRESS IN THE BERRY GARDEN.

Molly Grothaus

THE CHALLENGE OF GROWING IN SHALLOW CONTAINERS. Carl Young

- 11:25 *Photo Finish* Photo Contest Winners.

11:35 *Finale*

- 11:50 Last chance at Exhibit Hall.
Sales and pack-up.
12:15 Sack lunches available at Dining Hall.

call for answers. The last week, as cancellations were made and replacements were added from a waiting list, three different committee members received them and had to consult several times daily; one listed Telephone Contact Person (listed in the publicity) could have cleared such messages and relayed them to the appropriate local source.

Our Program Chairman, having once secured the speakers, had to select Moderators for each session. These people were skilled at snappy introductions of the speakers and helped keep the program moving. In behind-the-scenes detailed scheduling we allow five minutes between speakers, for introductions. Actually we plan to use only two to three minutes, leaving time to add an announcement now and then rather than having a twice daily 15 minute recitation of announcements. In our program, as printed, we don't list duration of talks, giving only the titles of a group of two to four talks in a given time space. Every speaker, however, in addition to his advance instruction sheet receives a detailed, behind-the-scenes time sheet giving set-up times as well as program timing. Every committee member also has one of these time sheets, which is never seen by the audience, but helps keep things running smoothly. Thus the speakers know their time and that they are expected to stay within it. We use a timer-bell that rings three minutes before the end of the assigned time. The speakers and the audience are told that the first bell doesn't mean over-time, but rather that three minutes of talking time remain. If the speaker has been dawdling, he has to finish up quickly. Five minutes past the first bell, a second bell rings. Thereupon the Program Chairman brings the talk to an end. Sounds brutal? Our audiences and speakers prefer it to having one thoughtless speaker runs 20-30-40 minutes overtime, stealing time from all fu-

ture speakers and paralyzing the listeners. We've only had to use the second bell twice in fifty talks in five years.

Rib 7. Planning the Budget. We have never lost money on a Study Weekend. The committee plans its budget and then adheres to it. The first step is to estimate the minimum attendance you can realistically expect. Be conservative. How many attended last year's Weekend? If it was good, about half of them will come this year. In the West we first send out a notice, at least six months ahead of time, to all ARGS members within the area, stressing the importance of registering early. Then, several months later, publicity is sent to other horticultural groups and colleges in the vicinity of the meeting, also to the local news media. This gambit not only swells the audience but has brought in a number of new members.

Surveying the attendance patterns of several years, we find that if the Study Weekend is near a smaller town or center of rock gardening, about one third of the delegates will be from the local area and half of these will probably not be rock gardeners, but students, garden clubbers, or just gardeners. In larger cities, maybe half the attendance will be local, the rest will come from over 50 miles away. How far is your Study Weekend site from where the largest numbers will come? Further or closer than last year's meeting? If last year's meeting was a dud, some delegates won't try again, though a tempting program and sharp publicity can counter this. How about the nearness to holidays and competing events compared with last year? In planning our 1981 event we wrote off transcontinental delegates, reasoning (correctly) that they'd save their money for Nottingham's Alpines '81. If more attend, the resultant increase will sweeten your budget picture.

It is fashionable to import a speaker or two. We plan for round trip airfare, costs of food and lodging (out-of-area speakers are usually happy to be lodged in private homes aside from the conference time), and a fee if we are paying one. While a speaker for \$800, using this formula, may sound expensive, for a budget contemplating a minimum of 180 people this is less than \$4.50 per delegate. If your fee per delegate is \$40, a \$4.50 item is not unreasonable budget-wise, particularly if having the speaker boosts attendance by 25 or 30 people, improving the budget. Once you've passed your minimum budget costs, certain expenses such as speakers remain fixed no matter how many people attend, so you profit a little on each additional registrant.

Most of our speakers are people within our own region, which may include several states or provinces. We don't pay their way if they normally attend the Weekend anyway. We may choose to pay part if they come from a long distance, or we may choose to pay some of their food or lodging, or simply exempt them from registration fees. We have used all these methods and have never had a potential speaker refuse based on financial arrangement. We also may pay part of Study Weekend expense for some major committee heads, often a good incentive for poverty-stricken, busy volunteers; many of them contribute 50 or more hours' labor. Any such arrangements must be planned in the budget. We may budget up to \$300-\$400 for prepaid fees for major workers.

The expenses for facilities must be budgeted: the cost of rooms required for lectures and exhibits, including any coffee service, which often costs more than the room. Figure any costs for supplemental lighting, or sound or projection equipment needed, or any table rentals.

Banquets are a major budget item —

negotiate them as if your life is at stake. Prices may vary several dollars per delegate. Since conference food is rarely particularly memorable, is the higher-tab item worth it? Cocktail-bar setups are usually without cost, since the drinks are sold. Get a committee or person working very early to check possible facilities. Places lacking in-house restaurants can still serve catered meals sometimes. Explore many offers including clubhouses, grange halls, schools, universities, park meeting rooms.

How many publicity mailings, to how many people, will advertise the event? This substantial expense is bread upon the waters. In 1980 we used three separate mailings spread over six months at a cost of several hundred dollars. Those multiple mailings resulted in possibly 100 added delegates and probably swelled our final profit by at least \$1,000. Will the mailings go with a single stamp or stamped envelope or will they weigh enough to require supplemental postage? Remember to budget the mailings needed to send receipts or acknowledgements.

We also budgeted several hundred dollars for telephone expense. Too many volunteers are working too hard for us to have to wait endlessly for responses from speakers or committee members to be mailed back. If it costs \$15 to phone Britain and get a specific yes or no from a speaker and at the same time work out details in a conversation, is there any real gain in saving the money, spending fifty cents and waiting four weeks for a reply that proves to be conditioned on several new questions? So we use the phone freely to speed planning. But this must be budgeted.

We spend a lot on publicity, which if stimulating will repay the investment and more. Spending \$60-\$70 at a graphics-art store for transfer letters will make non-artists' work at the typewriter look

more professional by adding larger headings in bold commercial type or script. Such can be installed easily and quickly by amateurs by pasting them in the correct position on the page. We reproduce writing, sketches, photos and lithographs from old books, going back over fifty years so as not to violate copyright laws. Even on old pieces we acknowledged the author or artist of the work we reproduced whenever possible.

By making your own cut-and-paste copy you can save a lot of money over having a printer do this preparatory job. Such paste-up copy can be made the same size as the finished reproduction or the reproduction may be reduced photographically. If it is to be reduced be sure to check with a printer to get the correct overall proportions for the pasted up page. Use volunteer typing, cut and pasted together, not typeset print. Find a local source for low-cost quick-copy printing. Such sources will be clustered around colleges and universities, competing for student business.

Our publicity budget, excluding mailing costs, may run to a few hundred dollars. If you produce a Study Weekend booklet, you'll need additional budget. But by doing our own makeup work, then using quick-copy printing and hiring the collating and stapling, we were able to produce a 64 page booklet at \$1.50 per copy, though we budgeted a more realistic \$2.00.

You'll need to budget for name tags, projector light bulbs, folders or envelopes to hold the delegates' information packets, about \$50 worth of incidental office supplies, perhaps gasoline and minor travel expenses. There may be signs, posterboard and paints, truck rental to transport things. We bought a roll of tickets for a raffle. (We made \$100 profit selling \$1 tickets for a Farrer book purchased from a used book dealer for \$35.) We also allotted money for special

effects and costumes. Then we added an extra 15% over our total estimated costs as an emergency cushion and we had our budget.

(The budgeted figure for all expenses, excluding hotel rooms and meals for the delegates, should be covered by the registration fee. Three separate options may be presented to each delegate who signs up for the Study Weekend. The registration fee, which must be paid by all delegates attending the weekend whether or not they stay at the convention center and eat the meals planned by the committee. (Some people prefer to make their own sleeping and eating arrangements.) The cost of attending pre-arranged meals can also be kept as a separate item so that delegates who do not sleep at the convention center, but wish to eat their main meals with the group, can sign up for these and pay in advance. In the East we generally do not include the cost of breakfasts in the meal item as we have found that many delegates, even those residing at the center, prefer to order their own breakfast choices rather than paying for a set menu. Room rent, as another separate item, usually paid directly to the hotel, can be added to the registration fee and cost of meals for those who wish to sign up for the whole package. What you get with each item should be carefully spelled out on the registration form so there will be no misunderstandings. — Ed.)

Rib 8. Exhibits, Shows, Contests.

We sought exhibits from the chapters and other alpine garden societies on the West Coast; most brought exhibits. We phoned all specialty nurseries in the area that dealt in any rock plants asking them to bring a display, free if their owners were ARGS members. Over half came, from as far as 400 miles distant. Their displays were superb and we were able to bring sellers into contact with

potential customers, though we didn't allow selling from the Exhibit Hall displays.

We had sellers of pottery and accessory garden materials (invited if the owners were ARGS members, to have some control over who came). Arboretums brought displays, as did educational institutions with horticulture programs. National and regional specialty-plant societies with plants suitable for rock gardens came — penstemons, heathers, iris, primroses, rhododendrons, bonsai, hardy plants, native plants, etc. Individuals brought photographs and displays of specific plant groups and such things as scree gardening. Other Study Weekends

In her Adventures in Wonderland, Alice comes upon a table set for a Mad Tea Party. As she approaches, the March Hare and the Mad Hatter cry out,

NO ROOM, NO ROOM!



In 1981, exactly one month before the sixth ARGS West Coast Study Weekend, we are sounding the same cry. We have reached 280 reservations, beyond our 275 capacity, and are now placing any others on a waiting list. For the first time, some who planned to attend will be turned away, confirming our warnings not to delay. Please inform anyone planning to show up at the Weekend without now being registered not to do so. They will not be allowed to register at the door; the lecture hall holds only 275 and we have agreed not to sell standing room. WEST COAST STUDY WEEKEND SIX IS SOLD OUT.

Sold Out — Notice sent out about one month prior to meeting.

have included exhibits of flower painting and botanical illustration; we had some. In all there were fourteen commercial exhibits, thirty educational exhibits, plus slide-carousel projectors showing certain genera, programmed to run on automatic setting. There was a plant sale, a seed sale, a book sale, and a show-and-tell table open to everybody.

Rib 9. The Selling of a Dragon.

This is a really big rib, which in various conferences ranges from the sublime to the insulting. Try the sublime. Give your publicity a healthy budget and a creative, slightly mad chairman.

At least children with lemonade stands are eager for customers — their signs are whimsical. Too bad most of us outgrow that little-kid enthusiasm, because that's what good publicity is all about.

If you want people to come, what would persuade you to come — a sterile, typed list of events, leaving two-thirds of the program unannounced? If you give out first publicity at the previous year's Study Weekend, as we did, a year ahead it saves mailing money. You may not have all the speakers lined up; then announce three or four events, sound excited, and say that Communication 2 will follow in six weeks with more details.

Why did you select your speakers in the first place? Because they're good. Then trumpet this to the world. One time our notices said "IF YOU MISS BEING IN PORT ANGELES IN FEBRUARY, YOU'LL HATE YOURSELF IN MARCH!" We distributed a flier at the 1980 Study Weekend that demanded "IF YOU HAD SOMETHING PLANNED FOR FEBRUARY 20, 1981, CHANGE IT." Two months later, ten months before the event, we had advance deposits from 100 people. We sold out, full, before the event opened. Unleash your most irreplaceable member on the publicity with the assignment that they're to make people want to come.

Multiple announcements sent as a series pay off. If space at your Study Weekend is limited, say so early and start a stampede. Once you've decided your basic per-person cost (your budget divided by the minimum attendance), announce the price *if paid by a certain date*, (perhaps three weeks before the event.) Then list another price, \$15 or \$20 higher, for those who pay at the door or after the cutoff date. Your registration people will have a 95% complete list of delegates two weeks before the event and can get ready in an orderly fashion. Your finance chairman will love you, for the money will be banked before the event begins, and he/she won't be guarding a mint-full of money over Study Weekend. Late-decidors will have a penalty-incentive to make up their minds earlier. To induce this early registration, be liberal with refund terms in your publicity. We offered refunds if notified up to ten days before the event, and refunded money without question where last-minute emergency was the cause.

Publicity must be upbeat, not dreary announcements, whether the style chosen is fastpaced-excited or whimsy-magical. Our people sent in their registration forms and checks with "How could a person stay away from an event that sounds so exciting?" Our profits, made by how many more people attended than our basic-minimum budget predicted, will help pay for big name future speakers, so each successful Study Weekend brightens future prospects. We've established a fund to be able to loan as "startup money" to other West Coast Study Weekend committees.

Rib 10. Getting to Know You.

We've worked to avoid having newcomers (who will be excited by the program and exhibits) left in corners during social times as old-timers celebrate the gathering of the clan. Our name tags have big

print — the calligraphy is fun! — so people don't have to squint. We've added slogans. We arrange several social hours with a variety of beverage options. We have name and address lists of those present as part of the Study Weekend bulletin. We stage photo and slide contests where newcomers are welcome. The rules are in the publicity. Old-timers are appointed to seek out first-timers, quite a task since there may be fifty or more of the latter. If we assign lodging or meal-seating, we avoid geographical-block grouping.

This year we asked people to come in Alice in Wonderland character costumes to the dinner. It was optional, and the quarter who did were enough to develop a wonderful Mardi Gras getting-to-know-you hilarity. We'll probably repeat the idea. We had long lunch hours and places available for informal evening discussions, and asked our speakers to circulate around.

Rib 11. Supplemental Income.

Our publicity said that to do so much for so little would require everyone's help. If delegates didn't have surplus seeds, we'd furnish envelopes and they could help package those that did arrive. Or they could bring plants or used garden books. Our committees pre-priced everything (we included used bulletins from several societies) so the sales opened a few hours after the delegates arrived. Our people snap up used gardening books and journals. We asked people to bring special items to donate to the auction, and for it we skimmed some choice items from the plant and book sales so people could bid on them rather than physically fighting for possession. Tidbits donated for the auction included botanical prints done in needlepoint, elegant dried-flower wreaths, Curtis botanical prints, and a small fortune in rare varieties of bonsai trees brought by one

of the speakers. The auction was limited to a few choice items because we could allow less than an hour in our schedule. Nevertheless these supplemental income sources yielded about \$1,000, more than had been predicted in our conservative budget. East Coast Study Weekends have competitive plant shows, a good idea we may copy.

All these events mingle people as in a great bazaar, heighten enthusiasm, introduce strangers. Virtually everyone attending contributes in some way before the weekend is over, and they feel good about it.

Rib 12. A Conference Booklet. An ambitious one is your option. Our 64-page booklet, titled "The Garden of Talking Flowers" was a labor of love. It may become a collector's item, because it contains six original articles, plus reprinted material from four other authors, some original artwork, and poems like "The Jubblerock." Even a four-to-eight page pamphlet is welcome. It can contain a greeting, lists of those attending, the program schedule and announcements. Ours did double duty by including informal biographies of all speakers. Thus our moderators' introductions could be short and snappy rather than tiresome obituaries. We described the specialties of each of our fourteen exhibitors to induce Weekenders to sample their wares. We didn't charge most exhibitors for space; we might charge national organizations like fertilizer companies and spray suppliers, but we believe the specialty nursery displays are interesting additions to the weekend and

we want sellers and buyers to find each other.

And so the 12-ribbed dragon was constructed. The real excitement is watching the creation gain life, slowly at first, then gathering momentum. The final week, the last 24 hours before show time are the best. All those chairmen and their committees really moving into the task — if assignments are carefully drawn, there is little tripping over one another. The exhibitors arrive with their exhibits, and a major part of the show is filled with the efforts of dozens of people with no major work on management's part beyond directing them where to set up. Then the stage lights dim, the March Hares and Mad Hatters take the stage, the moderators moderate with their brightest witticisms. The speakers bring their road-shows of slides, talks, demonstrations. And everywhere in the shadows is the Production Manager, keeping the machinery oiled. The Small Army of people is real now, creating the friendly dragon of a Study Weekend.

Caught up inside the dragon as it moves, breathes, vibrates with a life of its own, one can feel a bit like Jonah waiting to be vomited out on a safe shore. Yet it is exciting to the Committee that brings it off. We called our committee The Caucus, a chairmanless group of dedicated souls.

I know a great lump of gratitude rose up inside our own throats at the end, with The Caucus and all the Speakers and Moderators onstage, and the audience on its feet, roaring approval.

The Dragon has 12 ribs — and a really big heart. §



The Showy Heartleaf

Kenneth Wurdack
Beltsville, Maryland
Photograph by the author

Hexastylis speciosa, or *Asarum speciosum*,¹ is one of the rarest and most desirable of the native heartleaves (wild gingers), yet is only one of a rather long list of distinct and handsome plants from the southeastern United States. It grows in northern Alabama in an extremely localized area of alluvial swamps and rich flood plains. When I visited the locality, the plant seemed peculiar to the sultry depths of thickets of canebreak and scrub, just a few feet from the water's edge. Summer heat, humidity, and mosquitoes combine to make its own comfortable habitat almost unbearable for human beings and thus afford a measure of protection from intruders.

The plant resembles its congeners in growing in small tufts with branching, slender, fleshy rootstocks. The leaves, scarcely distinguishable from those of the Arum-leaved Heartleaf (*Hexastylis arifolia*), are a variable triangular shape, faintly mottled with shades of green. It is not its leaves that make it the much sought after plant that it is. By the end of winter, the leaves look ratty, lying limp upon the ground. Spring brings new leaves that grow erect from the center of the plant, allowing the flowers beneath to be seen. These showy flowers, for which *H. speciosa* is named, are the largest of the native heart-leaves. The three-lobed calyx, instead of being pitcher shaped as in *H. arifolia*, is abruptly expanded near the middle and contrastingly colored in different shades

and combinations of red and brown. The interior of the flower, which is about two inches across, is darkest on the lobes, though narrowly rimmed with gold. Deeper within the cup is a sunburst of gold circling the cluster of pale green anthers and stigmas. The buds appear in great profusion, open in mid-May, and last for several weeks. It is reasonable to suppose that small crawling insects pollinate the plant, but seed has never been known to set on cultivated plants in the Washington, D.C. area.²

From observation of its habitat, one might try to duplicate its boggy situation in the garden, or pamper it in the alpine house. On the contrary, it thrives in any woodland environment, though preferably not confined to the restraints of a pot. Its hardiness may be doubtful in extremely cold climates; however, a member of ARGS in Larchmont, N.Y., has been growing it for several years.

For me (in Beltsville, MD), it grows exceedingly well in a raised bed especially designed for woodland plants. This adjunct to the woodland garden consists of a six-inch deep excavation lined with reversed turves overlain by one and a half feet of shredded oak leaves. The bed was allowed to decompose for two years, aided by some nitrogen fertilizer. Into such a bed can be planted various species of *Hexastylis*, *Asarum*, *Trillium*, and many other woodland and ericaceous genera.

The simplest method of propagation

of any *Hexastylis* species is by division. This can be done at almost any time of year, but spring seems best. Seed has never been harvested, thus propagation by this method has never been attempted.

I hope this article will generate some interest in *Hexastylis speciosa* and that propagation and distribution will save it from extinction.



Hexastylis speciosa

¹Certain Southeast members of the genus *Asarum* were segregated by C.S. Rafinesque (1883-1840) into the genus *Hexastylis*. The editors of *Hortus Third* chose to keep the genus *Asarum* intact.

²*Seeds of most Hexastylis and Asarum remain within the base of the very slowly decaying flower until scattered by ants (perhaps), or washed away by rainfall when the blossom finally disintegrates. They are very slow to germinate. It is possible that seed is not set in cultivation, particularly if only one clone is present or if a suitable pollinator is lacking in the area. It might be worth attempting hand pollination.* — Ed. §

An Awarded *Sythyris*

It is always satisfying to record progress that is in a forward direction, as too often of late years most of it seems headed for the drain. Fifteen snows ago scarcely anybody knew or grew *synthyris*. I'm in no position to know if the Bulletin article of 1972 had anything to do with it, but now these are regarded with considerable interest and seem to be grown quite widely. Carl English had recorded a selection of *Synthyris reniformis* he called 'Regina' and this is more or less duplicated in some selections made by Naomi Nyerlin in west-central Oregon in the Umpqua drainage, deep violet in color. When this was sent over to Kew and submitted by their Regius Keeper at a spring show in 1980 it was accorded the Award of Merit as *Synthyris reniformis* 'Olallie Violet'.
— R.D.

Silene Polypetala

F. C. Galle

Pine Mountain, Georgia

Photograph by the author

On moving to Georgia in 1953, one of the many challenges at Callaway Gardens was to preserve the native flora of the southeast. Seeking out information on native plants involved meeting many interesting professional and amateur botanists among them Dr. Wilbur Duncan, taxonomist for the University of Georgia, who, in 1954 showed me an herbarium specimen and told me about collecting *Silene polypetala* in Talbot County, Georgia.

Herbarium specimens seldom turn a horticulturist on, but the size of the frimbriated flowers was most unusual for a silene and led to a search. In 1954 my several weekend hunts failed to locate the plant. However, in 1955 a small colony of plants was found on my second weekend of exploration. Getting turned on was easy for the beautiful large soft pink flowers nearly covered the foliage.

The first colony of this plant (approximately eight square feet) was located in Talbot County on a narrow shelf below a steep wooded hillside overlooking the Flint River, located nine miles southwest of Thomaston, Georgia. Additional colonies have since been observed in the same general area.

Silene polypetala is on Georgia's Protected Plant List, and herbarium vouchers at the University of Georgia in Athens report it only in two counties — Talbot and Decatur. The herbarium at Valdosta State College has specimens collected in Gadsden County, Florida. The Georgia Department of Natural Re-

sources reports that the plant was also seen in Crawford County in Georgia, but no herbarium specimens are on record.

Silene polypetala is a low creeping perennial with decumbent stems that root and continue to spread. The opposite leaves are spatulate to elliptic, up to two inches in length and, in mild winters, are persistent. The stems are very hairy and usually less than six inches high. Several botanical descriptions state the stems may be twelve to sixteen inches tall, but I have never observed them this high.

At a quick glance the pink flowers look similar to those of a dogwood but the five wedge shaped petals are deeply fringed at the tip. The attractive flowers average one-and-a-half to two inches across and nearly cover the foliage. I have only observed the plant with beautiful soft pink flowers, but again several botany manuals report flowers white to pink. The calyx surrounding the elliptical seed capsule is hairy and very sticky.

Plants in the garden flower in early to mid May and are best in light to medium shade. In heavy shade the plants are very sparse flowering. They respond well in acid well drained soils, high in organic matter. The plants in our area have been exposed to nearly zero temperatures, but only for a very short duration, with no damage. (A plant, given to us by Mr. Galle, in our garden in northwestern Connecticut, where it blooms in mid-June, has survived and blossomed well in a sheltered position at the edge of high pines for several years despite winter



Silene polypetala

temperatures of well below zero — down to -27°F with no snow cover. — Ed.)

This plant, with its spreading habit of growth, suggested propagation by cuttings. Firm softwood cuttings taken in late spring and summer are easily rooted under mist or in high humidity chamber. Due to the ease in rooting and dividing plants in a stock block, we seldom collected seed and our success in propagating by seeds has been very poor. I have never observed seedlings around our established plantings, but given a proper site the colonies continue to enlarge by natural layering. I have collected seed from plants in my own garden for the 1981 ARGS seed list. Over the years I've furnished plants to several specialty nurseries, both on the east and west coasts, so plants are available. Unfortunately,

Silene polypetala is not commonly described nor is it pictured in wild flower books, so the beauty of this rare plant is only known to a very few.

Silene polypetala has been given several different taxonomic names. The plant was first described in *Flora Caroliniana* (1788) by Thomas Walter as *Cucubalus polypetalus*. It was later described as a *Saponaria officinalis* with double flowers. In 1818 the plant was given the name *Silene Baldwinii* (and occasionally *S. Baldyinii*) by Thomas Nuttall, and retained this name in the monograph of North America Silenes by Hitchcock and Maguire in 1947. However, in 1948 M. L. Fernald and Bernice Schubert, after examining the British herbarium of Thomas Walter, discovered that he had given this plant the

name *Cucubalus polypetalus*. Thus, by modernization, the plant became *Silene polypetala* (Walt.) Fernald and Schubert. It's no wonder that such a rare plant, with all the problems in naming, should go unnoticed by the general gardener.

The story is not complete without including the following information. In 1956 I learned that Dr. Arthur Kruckeberg, botanist at the University of

Washington, was working with silenes. Plants of *Silene polypetala* were sent to him for his study and his inter-specific hybrid program.

In 1961 Dr. Kruckeberg published an article "A Garden of Catchflies" in Vol. 19, p.1 of the ARGS Bulletin in which he used the former name *S. baldwinii*. A report of his success in inter-specific hybrids gleaned from the article is as follows (I have substituted here *S. polypetala* for his designation.):

Hybrid	Habit	Flowers
<i>S. polypetala</i> x <i>caroliniana</i>	Compact	Pale pink to white-tinged pink; fringed petals
<i>S. polypetala</i> x <i>car. wherryi</i>	Compact	Pink; fringed petals
<i>S. polypetala</i> x <i>rotundifolia</i>	Spreading	Pale red; fringed petals
<i>S. polypetala</i> x <i>virginica</i>	Low Crest	Pale red; fringed petals

Quoting from the article: "I must sing the praises of the crosses of *polypetala* with *caroliniana* and with the two red species, *rotundifolia* and *virginica*. They are superb."

Caroline Dorman, the dedicated gardener of Louisiana and late beloved friend to many of us, is also quoted. "They are the toughest silenes I've ever tried. . . . You simply must introduce these wonderful rock garden plants to horticulture. . . . I shall be happy to hear you quote me as saying they are the most beautiful rock garden plants I have seen and most adaptable."

In a recent phone call with Dr. Kruckeberg, I've learned that the silenes are

unfortunately attractive to those greedy Northwestern slugs; and it's doubtful if these silene hybrids are available commercially on the west coast. I must also report that we lost our plants, at Callaway Gardens, of the cross *polypetala* x *car. wherryi* when reestablishing new growing beds. Dr. Kruckeberg encourages growers of *Silene polypetala* to remake these hybrids, especially with *S. wherryi* and *S. virginica*.

I hope this article and photograph will rekindle an interest in *Silene polypetala* and its potential hybrids. To see this beautiful rare plant of Georgia and Florida in a garden is to love it. §

• • •

Adam was a gardener and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work, is done upon his knees.

— Rudyard Kipling

Propagation of Woody Plants

Some General Observations

JAMES E. CROSS

Cutchogue, New York

Of the numerous considerations in the propagation of woody plants, perhaps the most important is the *care used in the selection* of the specific wood to be propagated by rooting, grafting, or budding, or the seed to be germinated. Too little thought and time are given to the selection of the propagation wood even though exact duplication of the parent is typically the objective.

Proper selection is especially important when propagating the most dwarf forms for the rock garden, where we need to assure these same dwarf characteristics in the progeny — and this is often not so simple as just taking a branch from the right plant. *Chamaecyparis* of the species *pisifera* provides typical examples: the cultivars 'Mikko', 'Plumosa Compressa', 'Compacta', and most of the 'Squarrosa' group can produce two, three, or more distinctly different habits and rates of growth from the same parent plant.

To begin with, one should keep in mind that many of our best dwarfs derive from growth aberrations or "sports", which are not entirely stable in their genetic make-up even if the appearance of a single plant may suggest otherwise. Then the problem is further accentuated by the natural human tendency of good and mediocre gardeners alike to prune the plant a bit to enhance its appearance when taking cuttings (or scions for grafting.) By this process, one's cuttings tend to be the more vigorously growing bran-

ches, whereas the exact opposite is desired to retain the characteristic of dwarfness. If you are one of those who begrudge the taking of a cutting from your prize plant, you are almost certain to take the wrong type of cutting for propagation.

The very dwarf *Ilex crenata* are excellent examples of this point. As reported some time ago in this Bulletin, 'Dwarf Pagoda' and 'Green Dragon' will lose their dwarf characteristics in a very few generations if one uses the vigorous, juvenile end shoots for cutting material. There are those who believe that *Ilex crenata* 'Mariesii' was originally identical to 'Dwarf Pagoda' but lost its dwarfness in the process of propagation of the heavier, longer end shoots (which may account for the several rates of growth of 'Mariesii' available in commercial trade.) The solution is to take cutting wood *only* from the very short stubby side spurs. These may be small to handle, but they root readily at most any time of year.

When propagating some conifers by grafting, another side of the problem appears. A number of our prostrate or spreading forms, particularly among the firs, are derived by using the lower side branches, which usually will not later develop any upward growing leaders.

Another reason for care in the selection of the wood is to make the rooting process quicker and easier, especially when propagating in fall or winter with hard wood. If the particular plant roots

easily, it matters little, but, if it is difficult to root, selection of the wood can make all the difference. Among rhododendrons, the smaller, thinner leaves and stems from inside the plant and from its shadiest side will usually produce roots more easily than the heavier end growths from the top of the plant. Another example is found with *Leiophyllum buxifolium* where only the very small side branches produced by the last flush of growth of the season will afford any decent ratio of success when using wood that has hardened off. With *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, a ninety to one hundred percent success can be achieved easily and regularly in mid or late winter if the short growths from the center of the plant are used instead of the very tempting, long, juicy looking end growths on the plant's outside perimeter. Trial and observation are the great helpmates in building useful knowledge of this sort.

One reason for careful selection of propagation wood, even among very easy to root plants, is to shorten the time

required to obtain a finished plant of a desired size. There is no rule of thumb to guide one in this consideration and only trial and keen observation will show the way. With one species or cultivar a large, heavy cutting from an established stock plant in the ground may produce a finished plant in the shortest time, but in another species a small, juvenile growth from a young plant, possibly growing in a container, will do the job better. The circumstances, such as time of year, of your particular scheme of propagation will have a lot to do with this decision. §

This is the first of a series of articles that Jim Cross plans to write for the Bulletin on the subject of propagating woody plants, his topic at Winter Study Weekend – East, 1981. This and future articles will be well worth reading as Jim knows whereof he writes. He is a professional wholesale nurseryman whose exceptional plants, sold under the trade name "Environmentals", are in great demand. – Ed.

A Garden Lab

Sharon J. Collman
Washington State University Cooperative Extension
Seattle, Washington

It is difficult for a non-rock gardener to write about insects of the rock garden. My association with rock gardeners has been a wonderful experience. At last I have found people who get as excited as I do about the world underfoot (a convenient although perhaps unfortunate term). In addition, I have relearned plants names I had forgotten, learned about new plants and have even dab-

bled at "rock gardening" in my own garden. Despite the generous sharing of plants and information, my garden has clearly reflected my indecision as to what kind of garden it will be.

I have been accused of selecting plants that insects will attack (and I'm afraid it is true). It certainly makes watching, photographing and learning easier, if I can do it from a lounge chair in the back

yard. My madrona (*Arbutus menziesii*) has a leaf spot fungus and leaf miner, the unidentified native willow (*Salix sp.*) has played host to leaf galls, rust fungus, leaf spots, aphids, a stem miner, and sawflies. My rose, of course, gets blackspot and powdery mildew and, if I'm lucky (and it is not), it also gets aphids and the little, green rose slug that chews holes in the leaves. Despite these infestations, the plants live. And despite my best efforts, my rock garden plants are healthy — except those whose proper location I have not yet found.

There are yearly and even seasonal cycles when the insects or diseases are not active. In a few months my madrona will look a bit ratty from leaf spot fungus, but right now it is a picture of health. It's been a bit wet here and the miniature climbing rose is having a bout with powdery mildew. Since I do take pity on the plants too, I'll have to intercede with a fungicide.

Actually, my attitude is not so casual as it seems. I can be casual because my garden is my "laboratory." The loss of a plant is knowledge gained — and I only allow that to happen with plants that are expendable, replaceable, that I really didn't want anyway, or that are planted specifically as food plants for rearing insects. The other reason I can be casual is that by watching and reading I have gained a knowledge of the insects and diseases. I keep watch on pests, know what to expect, hope the beneficial insects or other organisms will keep damage to acceptable levels, and, if they don't, I intervene when necessary.

This decision making process in managing all the garden pests is called integrated pest management (IPM). Integrated pest management in its very simplest form is the integration of many pest management methods into a garden strategy. There are many pest management "tools" available beyond the

pesticide: parasites, predators, mechanical methods, and proper culture. Pesticides have been relied on too heavily and often used unwisely. This poor use by humans has given this valuable tool a very bad reputation of late. Pesticides have been the easy but not always the correct answer.

IPM is a challenge to the gardener's mind. It challenges the gardener to learn about the many garden creatures — most *not* pests. It is exciting to recognize the "good", and the "bad" and the beautiful; to be able to distinguish the degrees of pestiness, or a low population year from a high population year; to establish a *realistic* level of "injury"; and to learn of the management options and to be able to select a strategy suited to the pest, host, circumstances and time of year.

In some respects, the garden is like a little ecosystem — the gardener's own little ecosystem. The gardener plays the god and mother/father nature. The gardener judges this insect "bad" and like a vengeful god may judge the mere presence of an unknown insect as an intrusion punishable by death. (Stomp!). The gardener rains on the garden if nature does not and provides little glass roofs over the plant to keep off the rain if nature over-does. As steward of the garden, the gardener reads book after book about the plants, but often forgets the other organisms that are a vital part of that ecosystem. Most gardeners are aware of the existence of predator and parasitic insects, but perhaps less aware that nematodes, bacteria, viruses, and fungi can also be predators and parasites on other pests, even pests of "their own kind": insects battle insects and fungi attack fungi.

Just as tender plants get pests, a mass of aphids also has its attackers. In a creature-rich garden the aphids become a tasty target for lacewings, syrphid flies,

lady bird beetles and parasitic wasps. Most people recognize the “ladybug”, but are not so familiar with the pointy-nosed, fat-bottomed syrphid larva. And who would think that those little hard-shelled “things” stuck all over the plant are the swollen bodies of parasitized aphids?

Once the gardener becomes aware of all the aspects of the ecosystem the garden world expands. Spring brings the usual stretching forth of new leaves, expanding of buds and the grand opening of a long-awaited blossom. But now there are added the little dramas as the metallic blueblack mud-daubers gather mud for their nests, then search incessantly over garden soil for spiders and insects to provision each cell. Ants come and go, “visit” with antennae touching and, despite their reputation for industry, seem to make no sense at all some times, while seeming incredibly well-organized at others.

The gardener who observes and learns about the total garden ecosystem begins to relax. As knowledge grows (“Oh, that’s just a ground beetle in search of cutworms”), fear subsides. The tent caterpillar in a low population year can be pruned out or even ignored if it’s too high to get easily. If left, some will

survive to lay new eggs, but many will become food for other creatures such as birds or spiders. In an outbreak year, if there are no signs of parasite activity (white eggs of a parasite fly on the body) and too many nests to deal with, a pesticide may be required for protection.

(As an aside, *The World of the Tent Makers* by Dethier is a scientifically accurate yet poetic and enchanting account of the forces at work in an ecosystem. The tent caterpillar is the central figure and all the ecosystem has a part. A very readable book for a cold and windy night.)

Each gardener must ultimately decide the level of damage he/she can tolerate. A healthy plant can tolerate some chewing damage or fungus infection. (Usually the plant’s tolerance is greater than the gardener’s.) Initially, it may seem strange to tolerate any damage at all, and even stranger to think of a garden buzzing with insect activity as a healthy garden. But as the gardener’s knowledge and experience increases it becomes more of a comfortable concept.

My own garden, despite my tolerance, is a pleasant place to be, and shall continue to evolve as a place for plants and wee creatures alike. While I may be the steward of my garden, it is the teacher. §

• • •

I find working in the garden conducive to peace of mind. Digging about in the earth with one’s fingers leads one to the contemplation of the eternal verities of soil and sun, rain and wind, the circling seasons and the wonder of growing plants. I find it very difficult to concentrate on the state of the Union or the world, or to fret over whether fuel oil will be available next winter and, if so, how we are going to pay for it; I find it hard to worry even over such important matters as what to have for dinner while I am trying to create a proper home for a rare and recalcitrant alpine or freeing a planting of encroaching weeds. While I am working in the garden, I am, indeed, like unto the happy oyster.

• • • *of Cabbages and Kings* • • •

Virtue, so it is said, is its own reward. And, perhaps, it is best in this far from perfect world to leave the virtuous to Heaven or, if the above aphorism is to be taken at face value, to the dubious pleasure of basking in self-satisfaction (a lonely and rather disgustingly smug frame of mind, from my point of view.) Be that as it may, those with more mundane qualities appreciate an encouraging pat on the back from their peers and it is, perhaps, for this reason that societies, among them the American Rock Garden Society, give tangible recognition to those who have served them well.

As you read this the presentation of the 1982 ARGS awards will have already taken place (though not yet reported in the pages of the Bulletin), but at the time this is being written, the Awards Committees are still in the process of trying to select from among many worthy candidates those who, this July, will receive a pat on the back as a sign of our appreciation. This process of selection is not an easy task and is, on the whole, a thankless one. It has on occasion led to contention among the members of the committee and to discontented grumbling from those members of ARGS whose own favorite candidates have been overlooked; yet if one reads over the roster and the qualifications of those who have been selected over the past years, one must agree that the Awards Committees have on the whole chosen well. And so, perhaps now, while the members of this year's committee are still agonizing over their deliberations, is as good a time as any to review

the history of the various ARGS awards.

During the early years of the Society's existence there were no ARGS awards other than a Gold Medal, which was presented from time to time to the creator of the most outstanding rock garden exhibited at a major flower show, and a Bronze Medal offered by ARGS to local groups as an award for the winner at local shows.

The Gold Medal, about two inches in diameter, was very handsome. It had a low relief of a columbine on its face and was designed by Mrs. Garrett Smith. The die and the first medal cast were donated to the Society by Mrs. T.H. Fisher and was first awarded in 1935 to the best exhibit in the show at Fleischmann's Garden in Cincinnati, Ohio on the occasion of the Society's second Annual Meeting. The name of the recipient has unfortunately been lost. In 1937 it was awarded to Frederick Leubuscher and in 1939 it was presented to Zenon Schreiber, for gardens exhibited at the International Flower Show in New York City. In time this award dropped, literally, out of existence. An effort to locate the die was made in 1965, but there were no records of who had it nor of the company that cast it. Neither was it possible to discover further information about the Bronze Medal other than the fact that it was inaugurated in 1938.

It was not until 1964 that the American Rock Garden Society decided that an award should once more be instituted: it was thought, however, that such an award should be given for qualities more general than expert showmanship. It was therefore decided to present an annual

award to persons who had made "outstanding contributions to rock and alpine gardening and to the particular study of our native plants." This award was to be called the Award of Merit of the American Rock Garden Society and was to consist of a framed, hand-lettered and illuminated certificate giving in brief the qualifications of the recipient. Five such awards were given in 1965, and were presented by President Emeritus Harold Epstein at the first Awards Dinner given on the occasion of the Annual Meeting held that year in Sudbury, Massachusetts. Recipients were Claude A. Barr of Smithwick, South Dakota; Mrs. A.C.U. Berry of Portland, Oregon; Will Curtis of South Sudbury, Massachusetts; Dr. G.G. Nearing of Ramsey, New Jersey; and Edgar T. Wherry of the University of Pennsylvania. Citations giving the qualifications of these five people were read at the dinner and were later published in Volume 23 of the *Bulletin*. They make interesting reading.

In brief, Claude Barr was awarded for "furthering the horticultural use of the plants of the High Plains, Badlands, and Black Hills area of this country" through his many articles in the *Bulletin* and his dissemination of such plants through his nursery, Prairie Gem Ranch.

Mrs. A.C.U. Berry received her award for her personal efforts to collect and grow particularly good forms of native North American plants in her outstanding garden in Portland, Oregon; for her support of hardy plant exploration in this country and abroad; also for her donations of plants and propagules and her financial assistance to horticultural institutions and her gifts of plants to nurserymen and other plantmen.

Mr. Curtis was awarded for the conception and creation of Garden in the Woods, an extraordinary collection of native American plants on his property of thirty acres in South Sudbury. His

great generosity was also cited. Not only did he give plants, many of them very rare, and excellent cultural advice to other horticulturists, but he opened his garden freely to the public so that all who cared to come could study and enjoy native American plants in a natural setting. He had, in addition, arranged to donate his garden to the New England Wildflower Preservation Society with the provision that it raise sufficient funds for an endowment to maintain it as a center for the study of our native plants. This had been accomplished in the year prior to his receiving of the Award. (As of this writing the garden is still so maintained and a building containing exhibits, work space, offices and a lecture hall has been erected.)

Dr. Nearing received the Award of Merit for his tireless efforts to promote horticulture in various fields, particularly in the hybridization of hardy dwarf rhododendrons and the propagation of these and other plants suitable for the rock garden. His was the invention of the Nearing Frame, which made it possible to root cuttings of hitherto impossible or difficult to root plants. A dedicated scholar, he had inspired countless plantmen through his innumerable articles and lectures and had served the ARGS for a number of years as editor of its *Bulletin*.

Dr. Wherry was given his award for his many years of dedication to the dissemination of knowledge about native North American plants and their ecology while with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and, later, as a professor in the Department of Botany at the University of Pennsylvania. Though originally trained as a chemist, Dr. Wherry is a field botanist par excellence as well as a soil chemist and student of plants in the laboratory and in herbaria. He discovered and named a number of new species and generously shared his knowledge, plants and seeds with all who were interested.

He has lectured and written numerous articles and papers as well as several books on soil chemistry and its relationship to plants both in the wild and in cultivation. His books on northeastern American ferns and other North American plants, particularly the Polimoniaceae (Phlox and Polemoniums) and the Primulaceae (Dodecatheon) are well known. He was a devoted and hardworking member of ARGS since its early days, serving in many capacities, not least of which was his stint as first editor of the Bulletin, a position he held for five years.

Among other early recipients was Dr. Carleton R. Worth, another ARGS Bulletin editor, whose plant and seed collecting exploits, primarily in the Rocky Mountains, and whose writings and lectures, both in this country and abroad, did much to familiarize rock gardeners with the horticultural potentialities of native North American plants.

Also awarded during these years were Carl and Edith English, whose explorations for native plants, particularly alpine, in the western parts of the United States, resulted in the discovery of several new species and many outstanding forms. Their work over many years as growers and hybridizers of North American plants and their introduction of their hybrid clones into horticulture have made their names well known to rock gardeners and to many others who attended their lectures and classes on horticulture and botany, have read their writings, and visited the fascinating garden created in large part by Carl English at Government Locks in Seattle, Washington.

Also awarded were Frank Rose of Missoula, Montana for making available to rock gardeners the native plants of Montana, northern Idaho, and northeastern Wyoming; Lester Rowntree, whose collection and dissemination of the seeds of

California's native flora and of other arid sections of the world made these plants available to countless gardeners here and abroad, and whose numerous articles and books about Californian plants and her adventures while searching for them instructed and enchanted her many readers; Doretta Klaber of Quakertown, Pennsylvania, whose books, *Rock Garden Plants - New Ways to Use Them Around Your Home*, *Gentians For Your Garden*, and *Primroses and Spring*, written in a pleasant, easy style and illustrated with her own charming line drawings and watercolors, did much to win many people over to the art of rock gardening.

It soon became apparent, however, that there were a number of people, whose contributions to rock gardening did not fit into the precise criteria of the Award of Merit yet deserved recognition for their signal contributions to the Society. For this reason the qualifications for the Award were expanded to include outstanding service to the American Rock Garden Society as well as to rock gardening per se.

Among those honored in this category were Dorothy Hansell, a founder of ARGS, who had worked tirelessly and devotedly for the welfare of the Society ever since that time, first as combined secretary and chronicler of its affairs in the pages of *The Gardeners' Chronicle*, a horticultural publication inherited from her father of which she was publisher and editor. She continued in this dual role for fourteen years until this publication ceased to exist but continued to serve as secretary of the Society until 1950, taking on for three of those years the additional chore of editor of the Bulletin, which had come into existence when *The Gardeners' Chronicle* ceased publication. She continued to serve as the Society's historian, taking an active role in its activities even after she

had accepted the full time position as editor of the *Journal of the New York Botanical Garden*, which under her aegis became *The Garden Journal*. In 1959, on the occasion of the Society's 25th Anniversary, she wrote in the pages of the Silver Anniversary issue of the *Bulletin* an account of the founding and early years of ARGS titled "Looking Backward."

Others awarded primarily for outstanding service to the Society were Harold Epstein, renowned horticulturist, who had given unstinting time, energy and enthusiasm to ARGS as director for five years and president for sixteen, and Albert M. (Merle) Sutton, editor of the *Bulletin* since 1962. (He was awarded in 1970 and continued to serve as editor until he was forced to retire in 1975 by his rapidly failing health.)

Of course, during the years since its inception, a number of Awards of Merit have been given to persons whose service was to both the Society and rock gardening as a whole, a prime example being Bernard Harkness, awarded in 1974, who had conducted the Seed Exchange in exemplary fashion, practically single-handedly, for nine years and was president of the Society for two terms, to say nothing of his unique and invaluable contribution to rock gardeners worldwide as author and publisher of *The Seedlist Handbook*. Truly a distinguished record of service.

Though it has never been a rule, it was decided early on to keep the number of recipients of the Award of Merit to five, preferably fewer, in any one year on the theory that the value of the award might be diminished in the eyes of both the recipients and the membership as a whole if it were given too indiscriminately. During the first two or three years selections for the Award of Merit were made by the Administrative Committee plus a few members of the Executive Board who

were widely knowledgeable about rock gardening and its practitioners, but after those first few years it was decided to relieve the Administrative Committee of this task and have the President appoint a special Awards Committee to take over this duty.

As the years passed some of the original criteria for the Award of Merit were to a large extent forgotten and it came to be given primarily (though not always) for service to the Society rather than to rock gardening in general. Therefore in 1969 the Administrative Committee, with the approval of the Board, decided to inaugurate a second award. This was named in honor of Marcel Le Piniec, whose work as nurseryman, propagator and plant explorer, first in New Jersey at Mayfair, the rock garden nursery he founded in 1924 and maintained for twenty years, and later in Oregon, "...exemplified the very characteristics set forth in the qualifications established for [the award.]" The criteria for the Marcel Le Piniec Award were very clearly set forth. It was "to be given annually to a person who as nurseryman, propagator or plant explorer is currently and actively engaged in extending and enriching the plant material available to American rock gardeners." Mr. Le Piniec had been responsible for introducing a number of excellent forms of rock garden plants, among them the "LePiniec Form" of *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, which he had discovered while exploring for new plants in Oregon. The pure yellow *Lewisia cotyledon* 'Carroll Watson' was another of his discoveries and introductions.

It was most fitting that the first Marcel Le Piniec Award should be presented jointly to two of Mr. Le Piniec's fellow townsmen, friends and acolytes, Lawrence P. Crocker and Boyd C. Klein, outstanding nurserymen and owners of the Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery, "who by their individual and joint endeavors

[have] signally exemplified the qualifications of the award ... and are an inspiration to future explorers, propagators, disseminators, and lovers of choice plants for the American rock garden fraternity.”

Since then the award has been presented to Margaret Williams, Hazel and Don Smith, Roy Davidson, Ed Lohbrunner, Dwight Ripley and Rupert Barneby, Charles Thurman, Joel Spingarn, H. Lincoln Foster, Marjorie Walsh and Wayne Roderick.

The first Marcel Le Piniec Award was an inscribed stainless steel trowel; in later years it was a pewter serving plate.

A further ARGS award was instituted in 1973, this one named in honor of Dr. Edgar T. Wherry. It was to be given only from time to time (not necessarily to a member of the Society) for the dissemination of knowledgeable information, botanical and horticultural, about native American plants. A special standing committee was appointed to make the selections and the award was to be an original drawing or painting of one of the recipient's favorite plants.

Claude C. Barr was the first to receive this award, presented to him for his innumerable articles about his beloved plants of the Great Plains and for his book, *Jewels of the Plains*, which he considered the culmination of his life's work. (It was at that time in the hands of a publisher, who had already advertised its approaching publication in the pages of the Bulletin. Unfortunately, unforeseen events delayed its publication for many years. Now in the hands of the University of Minnesota Press it is scheduled for publication in either the winter or spring of 1983-84.)

Since 1973 the Edgar T. Wherry Award has also been presented, in 1974, to Frederick W. Case II for his knowledgeable and fascinating lectures and comprehensive papers, articles and books on *Sarracenia* species, orchids of the Great

Lakes region, and Trillium species, also for his courses in native plants and their ecology at the Arthur Hill High School in Saginaw, Michigan, where he is chairman of the Department of Biology, and at Delta College.

In 1976 Dr. C. Leo Hitchcock received the Wherry Award for his courses in botany and plant taxonomy at the University of Washington, where he was Chairman for the Department of Botany. He was also cited for the five volume work *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, of which he was the prime author, assisted by joint editors Dr. A. Cronquist, Dr. Marion Ownbey, and J. W. Thompson, and for his own one volume abridgement of this monumental work.

In 1980 John T. Mickel, Curator of Ferns at the New York Botanical Garden was awarded for his widely acclaimed books, *The Home Gardener's Book of Ferns* and *How to Know Ferns and Fern Allies*, the latter a scholarly field guide to the ferns and fern allies of America north of the Mexican border. Also mentioned in the citation were his popular courses on ferns at the Botanic Garden, his editorship of the news bulletin "Fiddlehead Forum" of the American Fern Society and his presidency of that august body for two years.

Though on occasion there have been grumblings that the ARGS awards have not been fairly divided from a geographical point of view (as though the various chapters of the Society were engaged in a parochial and somewhat infantile competition to accumulate as many kudos as possible rather than recognizing merit wherever found), it is quite interesting to note how evenly distributed the awards have been across the country; rather astonishing, in fact, in view of the disparity of memberships countrywide. In some areas rock gardeners are relatively plentiful, while in others, where the climate

and topography or both are not conducive to the growing of alpiners, or the building of rocky substrates on which to house them, rock gardeners are few and far between, though this is changing as gardeners learn that plants other than alpiners and even a few of the mountain dwelling species can, indeed, be grown in their area and that rocks, of themselves, are not essential to the creation of an attractive "rock" garden. Even in the more salubrious rock gardening areas of the United States, such as the Northwest and the Northeast, because of the differences in population density per square mile, there is a considerable difference in the number of memberships and chapters. For example, Washington and Oregon, with an area of 165,826 square miles and a membership of 330, some from British Columbia (1980 count), has two chapters, while the Northeast comprised of the five New England states plus New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware, with an area of 169,798 square miles has 898 memberships (again 1980 count) and eight chapters.

When one examines the provenance of the award winners it is interesting to note that 27 of the recipients of Awards of Merit, out of the total of 47 persons awarded, came from the Northeast, one from the Southeast, twelve from the

Northwest (counting one from Alaska), two from the Southwest, two from the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain area, and three from the Mid-West. Of the fourteen Le Piniec Awards presented, five have been given to Northwesterners, one to a resident of Nevada, and seven to Northeasterners. The Edgar T. Wherry Award has also been widely dispersed. Of the four given out so far, one was presented to a member from the Great Plains, one to an Easterner, one to a resident of the Great Lakes area and one to a Northwesterner.

In closing this review of the ARGS awards it may be a good idea to urge ARGS members countrywide to write to the members of the two awards committees, whose names are published in the Bulletin Board each year, giving them not only the name, but as important, a fairly detailed account of their candidates' qualifications for the various awards, always keeping in mind the criteria for each award as outlined above. It is only thus that the members of the two committees will have on hand a countrywide roster of suitably qualified candidates from which to select. Their task is difficult enough as it is and it is unfair to put upon them the additional burden of seeking out every possible candidate and researching their qualifications. §

The Ons Have It

It seems I perpetuated a horticultural goof when I wrote about the dwarf, shrubby *Vaccinium* 'Hamilton' in Volume 39, p. 193. I spelled the specific name *macrocarpum* instead of *macrocarpon*, as I should have. This was pointed out by our eagle-eyed treasurer, Frank Cabot, who had recently had occasion to check the nomenclature of this clone of *vaccinium*. After considerable research he discovered there was something of a split among the authorities as to the spelling of the specific name: Rehder in his *Manual of Cultivated Trees and Shrubs*, Hillier's catalogue, and the *Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of*

Gardening, all use the *um* ending, as does wholesale nurseryman James E. Cross, from whom we received our plant, and Alfred Fordham, who named the clone in question, 'Hamilton'. On the other hand *Index Kewensis*, *Hortus III*, *Gray's Manual of Botany*, *The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora*, Alfred Evans of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden in his book, *The Peat Garden and Its Plants*, and H. Lincoln Foster's *Rock Gardening* list this species with an *on* ending.

It would seem, therefore, that most authorities and all taxonomists favor *Vaccinium macrocarpon* for the species; therefore, we gardeners should bow to their expertise and change our labels to conform to that spelling.

Vaccinium macrocarpon 'Hamilton' was discovered in the wild a number of years ago in the Berkshires of Massachusetts by Ormand Hamilton, a plant collector and somewhat temperamental landscape gardener, who achieved considerable notoriety for suing his clients if they didn't carry out his plans to the letter. His eccentricities notwithstanding, Mr. Hamilton deserves our thanks for bringing into horticulture such a truly delightful dwarf shrub. — Ed.



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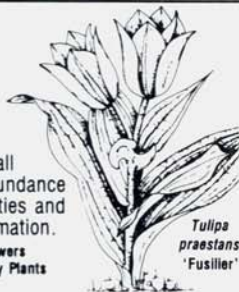
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