

PROPERTY OF  
AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

# BULLETIN

*of the*

AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

*including*

## SAXIFLORA

Vol. 5

September-October, 1947

No. 5

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*The American Rock Garden Society, incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey, invites you to join with its members in the pursuit of a better understanding of the problems of rock gardening. The annual dues are \$3.50. Address all communications to the home office, 19 Pittsford Way, Summit, N. J.*



# BULLETIN

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## AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

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### PLANNING THE ROCK GARDEN\*

STEPHEN F. HAMBLIN, Lexington, Mass.

**D**ESIGN in rock garden planning is as desirable as in any work of man. Even a rock garden wholly built by nature follows certain biological laws known as ecology. The plant grows there because it finds the location suitable to its needs. A garden wholly constructed by man has additional regulations put upon it, as the present trends in rock planting would dictate. No successful and pleasant rock garden just "grewed," no more than did Topsy.

The regulations for a pleasant rock garden may be very different from those for a cabbage patch or a formal rose garden, but certain definite general principles must be considered, to be followed or rejected as the builder may wish. At this time we shall omit the practical phases of construction, as V-shaped crevices, back-slanting of the rocks, back-sloping of all vertical walls, and "chinkers" between the piled-up rocks. These construction details, as well as soils used, amount of watering, size and kinds of rocks—all such are a part of the operation of building and are a separate discussion. Before any plans for moving the rocks are made, the over-all esthetic problems should be settled. What artistic effects do you wish to produce?

First, the choice of materials must be limited of necessity, unless your rock garden covers several acres. In Farrer's two books and the appendix by Sampson Clay there are described more than 10,000 species of plants for rock gardens (nearly 1,000 species of *Primula* alone), not counting named varieties. You must put some visual limit on the plants that you set out—not one tiny specimen of every dwarf plant that can be purchased, for that is a collection and not a garden. You will have to specialize in some way; in what way? You might use only those plants native to New England or eastern America for a New England rock garden; or plants from the Rockies or western America only; or those native only to the Alps of Europe (whence came all our rock plants first known to gardens); or rock plants from the Far East only; or true alpinists; or those evergreen of foliage; or be restricted to special genera, as *Saxifraga* or *Sedum* as main plant motif. Merely properly to limit your choice of plants takes more mental effort than to roll the rocks in place. A possibility of great value would be a rock garden nearly all of very dwarf shrubs (less than a foot tall, deciduous and evergreen), with no truly deciduous herbs at all.

\*Reprinted by permission from Lexington Leaflets, Vol. 17, No. 1.

We use a new and unusual topography, stony fields, ledges, old stone quarry, steep slope, retaining wall, crevices between paving, or variations of these. Always there are rocks, and the chief interest is in the unusual plants, but the rocks must always be present, either so placed by nature or laid by man in some facsimile of geologic formation. In some rock gardens the arrangement of the rocks in the likeness of natural formation is purely coincidental. But this is properly a part of the discussion of construction.

The effects from the union of the topography and the plants are quite different from any other type of gardening. This is a direct contrast to the usual garden scenes, and thus captures the eye of the visitor. The rock planting is a part of wild gardening and is associated less with the part of the property very neatly kept, and the feeling of the forces of nature is here evident. But rock plants of compact habit may be used in walls of formal nature, or between the blocks of squared stones used as paving. Still the purpose of the plants is to bring in the touch of nature as contrasted to the constructions of man.

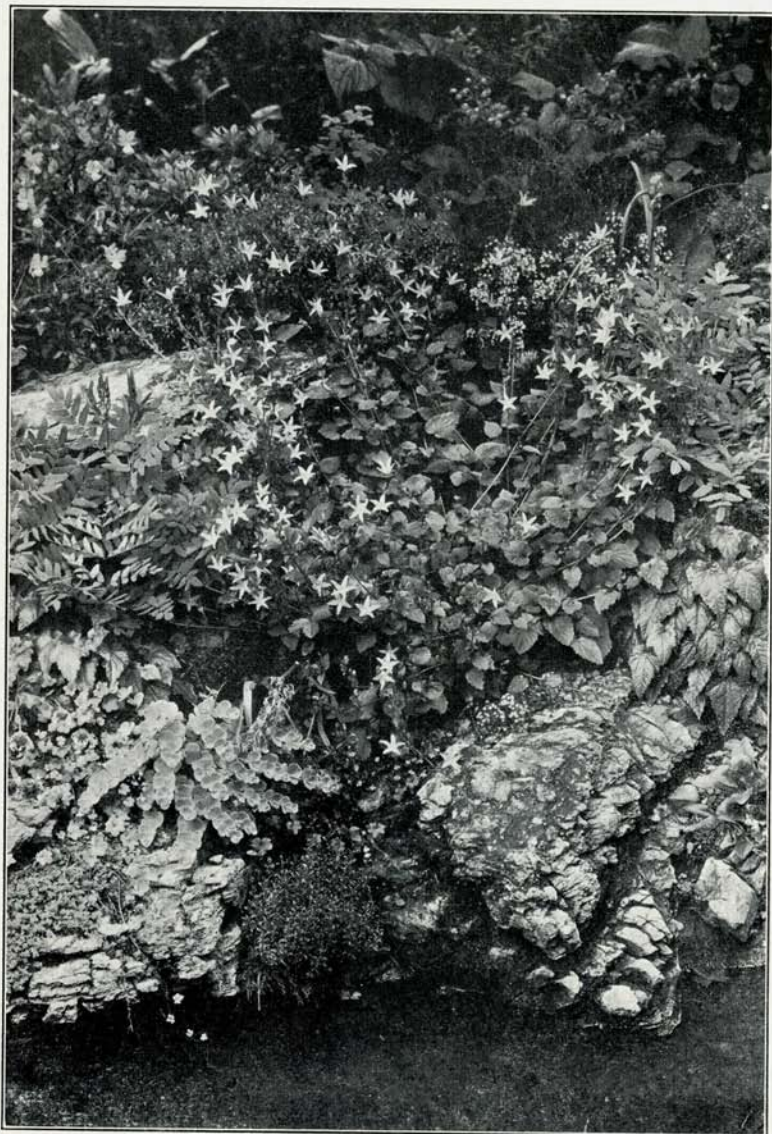
The rock planting, is, then, patterned after nature, in her arrangement of natural flower fields, as adapted by the brain of man to this artificial rock formation. The effect should be unified, but not uniform. Nature should be graciously allowed much credit for this successful show of flowers. If nature is not pleased with your plans and their development, she may cause your rare and expensive alpines to refuse to grow and give you a robust crop of weeds instead. The area is a presentation in miniature of certain natural scenery and its plants, somewhat the same as the miniature gardens of Japan, as its present extreme seen in the dish garden and the terrarium. But the outdoor rock garden offers so much area of operation that the enthusiasm of the builder feels no restraint, and nature would never acknowledge as her idea this brain-child of man.

The rock garden is a sort of sojourn into the hills, taking us physically out of our usual ways. If we had explored a mountain, we now bring it back in miniature and put upon it the plants and flowers that we saw there (or might have seen if we were physically more agile). Too often the rock planting has too much placed within it, especially in the period of the burst of bloom in spring. The place looks like an indoor exhibit at a flower show, and not any area in which nature was interested. In May the glare of colors from the very diverse color forms of our Moss Phlox give an eye strain that only the genii of Aladdin's lamp could have created.

There are truly no fixed general rules as to what to plant among rocks, save common sense and a feeling of the ways of nature. Some suggestions may be made as to the arrangement of the plants, which you may accept or reject as seems best to you, but think about these decisions before your pencil checks off lists of nurseryman's plants.

1. Keep the plants in masses of several plants of a kind, NOT as specimens of one plant only, unless you prefer an exhibition of rarities or a test laboratory. Of course a "mass" may be so large as to be out of scale with the rocks and the limits of the area; but most of us offend by having the units too small to be effective. There are exceptions, as ONE plant of a robust form of Moss Phlox, or most clons of Mother-of-thyme, will soon give one plant of such expanse that it is at least a dozen plants in reality. Then you "prune" these plants with real enthusiasm. Or, it may be for reasons of economy, that you buy but one plant of Sedum, Dianthus or Aubrieta. If you find that you like it, and that the plant appreciates the home that you have provided, then you increase it by seeds, cuttings or division, to have it in a bigger mass area.





BY FLORENS DE BEVOISE

Rock plants above a pool at Cronamere.

2. There must be some staging as to habits of growth of these plants. A simple classification as to growth habits:
- a. erect plants, as *Aquilegia alpina*, a tiny edition of border Aquilegias.
  - b. tufted plants, as *Sempervivum*, mostly of basal rosettes of foliage.
  - c. drooping plants, as *Arabis albida*, with a central root, but stems falling forward.
  - d. creeping plants, as Moss Phlox, which creep on the earth, rooting as they go.

Robust plants of these four habits would not be scattered among one another, nor would an area be planted wholly to one type, for that would be monotonous. But erect plants could be best placed on the tops of little hills where they are well separated from creeping plants, and show off to their best advantage. Tufted plants would be put in crevices, in small vertical areas, or where they are separated from creeping and drooping sorts. Drooping plants are for wall gardens and vertical rock faces, where they can hang down like the tail on a cow. But watch out that rare plants below them are not smothered. The usual *Arabis*, *Iberis* and *Alyssum* are not happy unless they can fall forward and downward to bloom in their own distinctive way. When these plants become over-large or leggy, prune severely back to the main root after the period of bloom. Creeping plants are the villains of this garden. They truly inherit the earth. One plant of *Sedum sarmentosum* can smother a dozen rare alpinines in a season. They will thrive even in rock gardens not too properly built, and may be walked on, sat upon or thrown on the compost pile to grow. Beware of having too many of them, for they have the potential energy of a fire in dry grass.

3. Keep the major flower masses of each month somewhat apart and assigned each to its own area of the garden. In May, great masses of Moss Phlox, *Aubrieta*, *Alyssum* and dwarf *Veronica*, each well spattered over the rock area, have merely the color value of a "crazy quilt," and lead one to think that its owner should also be restrained. Each major effect of any month should be enjoyed without too much interference from other major effects.

4. But plan companion effects, as blue Moss Phlox with pale yellow *Alyssum*, either as harmony or as contrast, giving very striking effects in May-June, and more quiet notes at other months. Usually, have one plant of a combination definitely dominant in area and interest, that there may be no doubt as to which is more important, rather than about equal parts of two equally interesting plants. The problem of companion plants is very instructive and complex, both as to blooming in the same period, and the team play of giving later bloom by a second plant, as blue Autumn *Crocus* rising in October from the green foliage of a dwarf *Veronica* that bloomed in June. This relay team-work of plants of different blooming seasons is a real problem in calling signals.

5. Have interests all the year, with some bloom other than in the spring, with special study of foliage, fruits, growth habits, etc.; with real effort to have many plants with evergreen basal foliage, as *Sempervivum*, evergreen *Veronica* or *Thyme*. Even in winter, unless wholly covered with snow, these plants are worthy of the visitor's inspection. There should not be great areas of bare earth when autumn frost takes away deciduous foliage, and the muss and fuss of winter covering with hay (etc.) can be avoided by liberal planting of such as *Pachistima canbyi*, *Phlox bifida*, *Veronica officinalis* or *Sedum album*, plants that laugh at New England winters without special covering, and the tiny bulbs of spring will push up through them and bloom before these begin new growth.



6. The use of dwarf conifers in the rock garden, as baby Junipers, and of the smaller broad-leaved evergreen shrubs, as Heather or dwarf Lavender, brings two problems. The usual small evergreen shrubs may spread outward too widely and in age be too large for their allotted space, and near walks may overhang them to make them impassable. And forms of *Taxus* or *Arborvitae*, purchased when small, as truly dwarf by nature, may prefer to revert to type form and suddenly shoot up to forest size. It takes a prophetic eye to place happily the supposed "dwarf" clons of conifers. Or, few broad-leaved evergreens take a pyramidal habit, but many special conifers are little pyramids or cylinders, as Irish Juniper or Dwarf Alberta Spruce. These rise above the flat rocks or masses of Moss Phlox like the dragon's teeth that Jason sowed. Unless your rock formation is a sort of Giant's Causeway, this emphasis of vertical evergreen plants can easily be overdone.

7. Plants of very difficult culture belong to special areas, or are to be omitted, rather than attempted all over the rock area, unless you have a special helper for each type of difficult plant. Merely because a plant is sickly or "miffy" it should not be one of those planted in great quantity. I have seen once in a rock garden in New England such as *Primula suffrutescens*, *Meconopsis quintuplinervia*, *Phlox adsurgens* and *Diapensia lapponica*, blooming exceedingly well. Alas, those particular plants are long since gone and are seen there no more. Yet those plants that require much care and coddling are greatly beloved, and are exhibited with pride (when well grown) to all visitors.

8. A good rock garden can be built of local rocks and planted to the flora of that region (or similar climate) wherever there is rock formation, real or imagined. You don't have to own a bit of the coast of Maine or the isle of Vancouver to have a good rockgarden. There are rocks and plants on Lookout Mountain or in Death Valley. Merely the problem differs with the site in its practical angles.

Many of the best effects come by accident or circumstances, but the major successes are planned ahead of planting. (Some of the best ideas turn out to be disappointments.) There is much pioneer work yet to be done in rock plantings, especially in our different climatic regions. The whole proposition is a challenge to try and see if you can do it. The collector's instincts can be indulged in freely, as well as a desire to make floral pictures in a former barren waste.

## HOW WILL YOU ROCK GARDEN?\*

DOROTHY EBEL HANSELL, Summit, N. J.

**R**OCK GARDENING came of age some time ago in the United States. Yet every now and then we run across a disturbing sight, an abrupt mound of rocks quite out of tune with its surroundings,—indicating that some one failed to grasp the underlying principles of a rock garden.

What, then, is a rock garden? In spite of the name, the emphasis does not rest heavily on the rocks. A rock garden is not a pile of rocks collected as souvenirs of travels through the forty-eight states—worthy as such a project might be from another viewpoint. Nor, on the other hand, is the interest centered wholly on the plants.

\*This article was submitted to Horticulture, and published with extensive editorial changes; it is here presented more nearly in its original form.

The best answer to this question is still, in my estimation, the definition compiled by the American Rock Garden Society:

“A garden which provides suitable cultural conditions for alpine, saxatile and other low-growing plants, usually simulating in miniature the terrain and general appearance of the plants' natural habitat. Under some circumstances, the rock garden may be formal in character as, for example, when it is situated near a dwelling.”

But even when the rock garden is “somewhat formal in character,” it is still not a garden of regular lines, nor of geometrical patterns. It is formal only in that it is confined, restrained, in its lay-out and planting by reason of its proximity to a building. For a rock garden is one form of gardening in which the gardener does not try to bend nature to his will, but to coöperate with her. The most successful rock garden is the one in which the hand of man is least apparent. A rock garden, in other words, is a naturalistic garden in which rocks and plants are happily combined—the one complementing the other.

A rock garden may be large,—I have wandered through several which cover one, two and even three acres and include pools and water falls,—and it may be very small. I have seen two “pocket edition” rock gardens, one ten by ten feet, one ten by eighteen, and they were no less well planned, constructed and planted than the large ones. Yes, even to a tiny pool and diminutive stream. These gardens, large and small, are picturesque and at the same time provide ideal growing conditions for alpine and rock plants.

However, you can grow alpine and rock plants,—and grow them well without having a picturesque rock garden. On a very flat piece of land, one rock gardener has created an attractive home for his collection of unusual and rare plants. He has rocks, to be sure, and a stream; but his garden does not have the striking gradations in height one generally associates with a rock garden. Instead, this enthusiastic gardener has concentrated his efforts in providing the exact soil, cool root-run, moisture, shady or sunny spot—in other words, in meeting the particular requirements of each plant.

You can also grow these plants in a wall garden, one of the happiest kinds of rock gardening for a small property. Not far from where I live there is an attractive home, with several retaining walls on the front lawn. As these walls are in shade, they have been planted largely with Ferns, *Dicentras*, *Corydalis*, Primroses, *Ajuga*, *Iris cristata*, Lilies-of-the-Valley, *Vinca* and Violets. On another property with which I am familiar, a wall garden runs the length of the driveway; it starts at a height of two feet and reaches a height of six at the far end. This wall is exposed to almost full sun and so it is planted with sun-lovers — *Phlox*, *Alyssum*, *Dianthus*, *Arabis*, *Arenarias*, *Aubrietias*, Sun-roses, *Sedums*, *Sempervivums*. In May and June it presents a solid sheet of color.

You can go as far as to grow a few rock garden plants between the flagstones of walks and terraces—but your choice of plant material is definitely limited. You must avoid plants with succulent foliage—they'd be slippery and dangerous to walk on.

And, finally, you can raise alpiners and rock plants in frames or in an alpine house—in which case, however, your primary interest would be in raising this type of plant material, and not in a rock garden.



Let's suppose, for the sake of discussion, that you are going to build a small rock garden which will be pleasing to the eye and will provide suitable cultural conditions for your plants. The first consideration is location. Land which slopes gently is much more satisfactory than flat land, though flat land can and has been put to use for a rock garden. Eastern, western or southern exposure will do nicely. If you are obliged to use a northern exposure, you will be compelled to plant some trees and shrubs for protection to the plants in your garden. A northern exposure is, then, the least desirable.

Limestone, sandstone, granite, schist, tuffa can be employed in the construction of a rock garden. But please do not make the mistake of mixing the stones—select one kind and use it throughout the garden. Boulders may even be used, but only as a last resort, for they do not lend themselves to graceful design. If you live within a limestone area, you are, indeed, fortunate. Limestone is hard to beat, is probably the most picturesque and calls for less handling than any other kind of rock. It is very interesting, weather-worn in appearance and easily assembled into harmonious groupings.

Remember also that large rocks are much more effective than groupings of too many small ones—large rocks have character and create an impression of stability. Remember that the side of the rock which was buried in the soil is the one you are going to bury in the soil, when you make your garden. The weather-worn side is the one to remain visible.

In placing the rocks, see that the lines of stratification extend in one direction. And never up-end rock, with jagged edges pointing skyward. Always place them so that they tilt backwards—the water will then run into the soil in the crevices between the rocks and not wash off their faces. Drainage is very important. Water should never be allowed to accumulate and stagnate. Before you put the large rocks in position, strew small stones or gravel over the area on which you are building your rock garden—or run agricultural tile, if the problem of drainage is acute.

It is well to have the soil mixture ready to be placed around and between the rocks, as you put them in position. A good all-purpose mixture is made up of two parts of loam, one of leafmold, one half sharp sand and one half stone chips. Special mixtures can be placed in some of the crevices to accommodate particular plants—more limestone chips for lime-lovers, more acid humus for acid-lovers. A lean gritty soil is, on the whole, the most satisfactory. Alpines are not accustomed to a rich diet—such a diet encourages lush growth and few flowers.

They are, however, accustomed to less trying Summer weather than we have here on the eastern seaboard. Even the ones described as sun-lovers do not always appreciate the burning, dry, sunlight, nor the mean humidity. Therefore, shade from high trees, not dense, but light, and a cool root-run are beneficial. Many alpines and rock plants are best grown in a moraine,—water flowing slowly and gently beneath a bed of gravel or stone chips, with lean soil on the surface. Such a moraine can be made artificially with a concrete water bed; or, if you are lucky enough to have a natural stream, you can adapt part of it as a moraine, keep part of it as an open stream, and end up with a pool. In such case, you would have considerable latitude in cultural conditions and could test your skill in growing quite a variety of choice plants.

The possibilities in rock gardening are unlimited; you can pick the kind you want to develop and give full play to your imagination, provided you balance imagination with good garden sense.



**Saxitraga cortusaefolia**

Originally published as Plate 5 on December 31, 1938



## SAXIFRAGA CORTUSAEFOLIA

**T**HIS LOVELY representative of the Diptera section, from shaded rocks in the mountains throughout Japan and in Korea, commends itself by its very late flowering season and by the beauty of its foliage, which alone is a sufficient reward to the gardener.

Though more robust, this plant is closely related, and similar in flower effect to, but without the runners of, the familiar *S. sarmentosa*, the so-called strawberry begonia, widely known as a house plant, and less generally as a quite hardy garden plant in shade and dampish situations.

The plant flowers, in Poughkeepsie, N. Y., in October, often lasting in flower into November. At the time of this writing (November 7) the flowers are nearly past. It presents a peculiar, ghost-like appearance in its setting of brown, fallen leaves and naked stalks of other plants. It appears to be reliably hardy and thrives lustily in the shadier nooks of our garden, in a rather rich woodland soil which is not subject to drying out in summer. We have grown it for upwards of ten years and never knew it to be injured by severe winters. It came to us from the garden of the late Mr. Clarence Lown of our city, under the name *S. Fortunei*, which name is often confused and interchanged with that of *S. cortusaeifolia*. Because of this confusion, the following comment may be of interest:

*S. Fortunei* of Hooker is a very closely related plant, brought to England from cultivation in Japan, by Fortune, and first described by Hooker in Curtis Botanical Magazine, plate 5377, in 1863. This plant has subsequently been known in botanical literature mainly, if not exclusively, from cultivated specimens, though Franchet reported it from Tibet.

Fortune's plant appears, from literature, and from Hooker's plate, to be so close to *S. cortusaeifolia* that it is best regarded as a variety of the latter (var. *Fortunei* of Maximowicz, 1871). It appears to differ from the earlier known *S. cortusaeifolia* only by its toothed petals.

Illustrations in l'Illustration Horticole, vol. 11, plate 398 (1864) and in other works (Fore des Serres, 1875), of a striking, variegated plant, over the title: *S. Fortunei* var. *tricolor*, are likely to cause confusion. The subject of these plates belongs undoubtedly with *S. sarmentosa*.

The present drawing of *S. cortusaeifolia* was made from material in The New York Botanical Garden, originating from our Poughkeepsie garden.

Our plant is a deciduous perennial, forming a dome-shaped tuft of basal foliage produced by several, huddled crowns which may be easily separated in the spring. Each spring division will grow into an attractive plant in one season, and even flower in the autumn.

The leaves are roundish to kidney-shaped in general outline, mostly less than three inches wide, mostly with five to seven palmate lobes of unequal size. The lobes are unevenly, serrately toothed, and sparsely fringed, here and there, mostly in the sinuses between lobes, with bristly hairs. The texture of the leaves is fleshy. The degree of hairiness on the leaves and petioles is more pronounced in the early than in the later stages of their life.

The upper surface of the foliage is a rich green, smooth lacquer, very sparsely beset with curved, bristly hairs which are placed upon wart-like protuberances. The under surface is of a rougher finish, and of a striking, deep claret color which tends to fade toward autumn. It is more thickly set with hooked, bristly hairs. The petioles, in our plants to three and a half inches long, are of the same claret tint, with very few, longer, softer hairs; and they clasp the short, contracted stems with a fleshy, deep red, somewhat hairy sheath.

The erect flowering stems grow mostly to ten or twelve inches high in our garden, and occasionally half again as high. They are fleshy and smooth, except for a very few longish hairs, and bear one or more fleshy bracts below the inflorescence. Other, smaller, bracts occur at each branching of the panicle.

The main branches of the inflorescence are practically hairless, but the ultimate divisions and the petioles are minutely glandular-hairy.

Our plants bear from thirty to fifty flowers in a panicle. The flowers are white, except for the bright green calyx lobes, which are plainly visible at close inspection. In our plants, one of the five petals is elongated to two or three times the average length of the remaining, which are of unequal length. The longer petal is to three-quarters of an inch long. All petals are entire, acutish, linear-lanceolate, and, in our plants, only faintly narrowed toward the base.

From recorded descriptions it appears that in this species sometimes not only one, but two or three of the petals may be greatly elongated.

The ten stamens are of unequal length, about as long as the shorter petals. The filaments are white, spreading, and tipped with brown anthers. The bright green carpels are united to above the middle, the two styles divergent, and tipped with a mere dark point of a stigma.—P. J. VAN MELLE

*Saxifraga cortusaeifolia* Siebold & Zuccarini, in Abh. Kon. Bayr. Akad. Wiss. Muenchen 4<sup>2</sup>: 190. 1843.

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However faithful a drawing, it never furnishes quite as good an idea of the aspect of a plant as does a well-made photograph. Mrs. Williams has kindly given us permission to reproduce here one of her fine photographs of Alaskan wild flowers, *Saxifraga punctata* (page 91). This belongs to a different section of the genus than the one in the Saxiflora series, namely *Boraphylla*, characterized by having white flowers with petals all alike. (for an excellent brief treatment of the sections, see Hortus II, p. 660)

## TWO BEAUTIES FOR THE SOUTHERN GARDEN

Not living in a section where we can raise alpine plants successfully,—our rock garden being on the Lynnhaven River, Princess Anne County, Virginia,—we met some years ago a most charming and beautiful little annual, (almost a perennial with us),—*Nemophila insignis*, or Baby Blue-Eyes. It re-seeds itself each year, and resents transplanting. In 1924, my sisters were out west, and sent home from California a package of wild-flower seeds. We planted them, and were rewarded in early spring with a burst of heavenly blue.

We enjoy this "filler-in" especially when our native Atamasco Lilies are in bloom. The mingling of the snow-drifts of the Atamasco Lilies with the Baby Blue-Eyes, against a wooded background, creates a charming picture. The Atamasco Lilies increase in the garden, coming up in all directions. In April and May these two favorites are at their height of bloom.—ELIZABETH GREGORY HILL.





BY MAXCINE WILLIAMS

*Saxifraga punctata* has white petals with bronzy dots.

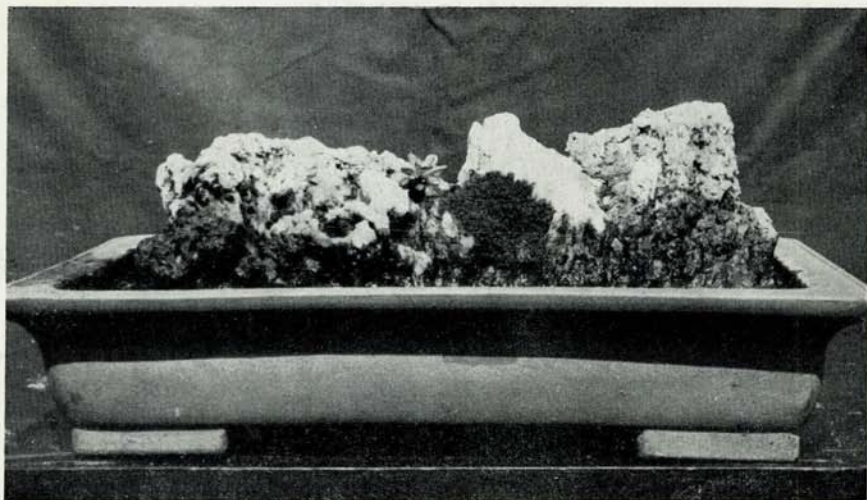
## STONE GARDENS IN SZECHUAN

BERNARD HARKNESS, Moravia, N. Y.

IT HAS BEEN demonstrated (1) by photographs taken in several mountainous areas of China that the curious outlines of peaks with veils of mist in Chinese painting are faithful to nature. It has long been understood (2) that the Chinese garden follows no pattern of style but is an individual evocation of natural scenes. However, the underlying symbolism (3) essential to Chinese creative work imposes its restraint.

Western rock gardeners have generally accepted degree of naturalness in placing of rocks as one critical criterion in garden building. The notable effects achieved, however, have utilized space and land denied by economic reasons to the Chinese.

The extremity of compactness is seen in the miniature tray landscapes, a gardening art the origin of which is lost in antiquity (4). During a stay in Szechuan Province in 1945 I had the opportunity to see a fine collection of miniature gardens at the home of a patron of the arts in Chengtu. It



BY BERNARD HARKNESS

Miniature mountain-cape with snowy peaks.

is interesting that as noted in the derivative Japanese school, the most cherished of all the collection was a broad limestone concretion with a glistening white crystalline intrusion which forms a snowy peak in the landscape picture. Lichen along its base indicates a timber line and the only other planting is a tiny succulent rosette. Plants represented in the collection were ginkgo, plumyew with contorted trunk, dwarf bamboo, juniper, and boxwood.

Of scattered occurrence in courtyards of both old temples and private gardens in Szechuan are larger rocks set in rectangular stone bases. Professor Daniel S. Dye of West China Union University, author of *The Grammar of Chinese Lattice*, has designated these as stone gardens. I can find no specific reference to them in the literature on Chinese gardens that I have read.

- (1) Sowerby, Arthur de Carle. *Nature in Chinese Art*. 1940
- (2) Ayscough, Florence. *A Chinese Mirror*. 1925
- (3) Gothein, Marie Luise. *A History of Garden Art*. 1928
- (4) Kuck, Loraine E. *The Art of Japanese Gardens*. 1940





BY BERNARD HARKNESS

A profusely planted stone garden in a temple courtyard  
in the Tibetan Foothills.

## MORE ABOUT VIOLETS

ELIZABETH LAWRENCE, Raleigh, N. C.

IN THE VIOLET number of the Bulletin I saw no mention of two Asiatic species, *Viola eizanense* and *V. patrinii*.

According to Hortus Second, *V. eizanense* is not known botanically. For all that, it is a distinct and lovely violet, and I wish I could grow it. It does not seem, however, to care for the summer heat, and repeatedly disappears from my shady rock garden after blooming very early in March, and producing two or three pale green and finely cut leaves. The large creamy white flowers are on short, slender red stems. The lower petals are delicately marked with fine lines of bright violet, and the upper two are streaked with paler violet. It came to me from Mr. Borsch, who recommends some shade for it, and woodland soil. I have read elsewhere that it should have an acid loam with some moisture and full sun. This is one of the prettiest violets that I have ever grown, and I would be willing to take some trouble to get it established if I knew what it really needs in these parts.

I suppose rock gardeners in more favorable climates will turn up their noses at the easily grown Chinese violet, *V. patrinii*. For the South it is a fine thing with clean attractive foliage, and bloom in spring and fall. It is one of the best plants for dry shade where the summers are trying and the winters uncertain, seeding itself freely, but not too freely, for it is nice to have extra plants to give away.

*V. jooi* from Southeastern Europe is another violet that I like, though with me it was transitory, and must be tried again before I can tell whether the trouble was the climate or the situation. I planted it in a dry place on a sunny wall, and gave it lime as Mr. Borsch says that it comes from the limestones of Transylvania. It is a real miniature, blooming with me from early spring into summer. The leaves are small and near the ground, and the flowers are lilac.

One of the nicest white violets that I have come from Mr. Osmun as *V. alsophila*, said to be native in the Adirondacks. Usually the small pure white flowers appear soon after the middle of March, and when they have finished blooming, the heart shaped leaves grow much larger and taller. This is one of the few white violets that I have been able to grow in dry shade, and it is one of the prettiest that I have seen.

I was glad to see Mrs. Henry's praise of that delightful Southern violet, *V. walteri*, which is so little appreciated here that I first came across it in a Western catalogue. Later Miss Caroline Dormon sent it to me from Louisiana.

Mr. Barr asks if *V. nuttallii* is always a shy bloomer in the East. It is with me, but after reading his account of it, I mean to see if it will not bloom better if I move it from the shade to the sun. It is the only plant of the Great Plains that has so far showed any tendency toward becoming established with me, though Mr. Barr has sent me many over a period of years. I was well pleased with the tiny yellow flowers and shiny pale green leaves, but of course I would be even more delighted if I could get it to bloom freely.





## A ROCK GARDEN POEM

One of the most exquisite rock gardens it has been my privilege to see is that of Dr. J. W. Sherer of West Orange, New Jersey.

Built on a gentle slope of about two hundred feet in

depth it is dominated by a cliff and pool with a background of conifers and rhododendrons. This is supplemented by four other units of rock bordered pool and one dry wall, all of which with the intervening lawn forms a beautiful ensemble which one might dream of but seldom see. Long study and planning have resulted in a harmony of color in every section and continuous bloom thruout the season. There is not an awkward angle in the entire garden and the general effect is of unrestrained and natural beauty.

Some time I shall write a poem and with borrowed word and phrase endeavor to interpret what Dr. J. W. Sherer has written in trees and shrubs and stone and flowers and sod, but the poem will not be as rarely beautiful as the garden.

A.H.O.



## THE AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

### MAINE UNIT RESUMES ACTIVITIES

At the first meeting of the Spring, the members spent some time in the rock garden of Mrs. Harry Hayward, Scarborough, where *Primula auricula* was at its best. Hundreds of plants were in bloom—and no two were exactly alike.

Acting on the proposal of Chairman Francis O. Libby, the members will endeavor to get together a set of one hundred slides. They've agreed to submit slides to a jury for selection of interesting rock garden subjects and for good photography. While the set will remain the property of the Maine Unit, it will be available for loan to other groups in the society.

### COOPERATION, PLEASE!

Every now and then, the mail man gives me a letter from a member which concludes, in effect, "If there were only some way in which I could show my appreciation of how much enjoyment I derive from the society, its Bulletin, etc. . . ."

Such an opportunity is now presented to all members. For the American Rock Garden Society has need of three things:

1. Articles for The Bulletin. The Editor's file of articles for coming issues has diminished to the point where it becomes necessary to issue an urgent appeal for material. From the wealth of knowledge of and experience with rock garden and alpine plants, which our members possess, we should be able to obtain a goodly number of interesting articles to ease the task of our Editor in preparing future issues of The Bulletin.
2. Photographs, too, are wanted. Illustrations point up an article and add to the general attractive appearance of The Bulletin. If you have photographs available—clean and sharp so they will reproduce clearly—be sure they accompany your article.
3. Seeds for the Seed Exchange is the third need. Mrs. L. D. Granger, of Warren, Mass., our director of Seed Exchange, will be very glad to receive your seed contributions. Her stock is also at low ebb. This has been a very satisfactory and successful project of the society and with your cooperation can so continue.—D.E.H.

Chairman Epstein has been active through the summer in arranging his program for the coming winter meetings and the complete schedule will be announced at the first meeting of the season, Wednesday, October 22 at the Pennsylvania Hotel; the speaker on this occasion will be Mrs. Mortimer J. Fox; full particulars will come to you later by mail.

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It is with deepest regret that we announce the passing on Sunday, August 31 of Mrs. Eva Hamilton Van Hoesen. Mrs. Van Hoesen was a charter member of our Society and was always active in its interests; a botanist, writer and speaker she will be greatly missed in horticultural circles.



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