Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia

Cyclamen coum blooming in January.
Photo by Carla Bischoff.

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AGC-BC 2021

In This Issue

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Membership Renewals Due

Membership fees are now due for 2021. Please send a cheque for $30 to Membership Secretary, Jane Byra, with your name and contact info. Cheques should be made out to the Alpine Garden Club of BC. Please contact Jane at membership@agc-bc.ca for mailing address.

Or renew online using your credit card through PayPal on our website www.agc-bc.ca/membership-renewal

Membership status can be checked on the website, after you sign in.

AGC-BC meetings are typically held on the second Wednesday of each month except July and August in the Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden. Doors and Library open at 7:00 p.m. and the meetings start at 7:30 p.m. **Please check Upcoming Events or website for information during the pandemic. To accommodate members and presenters from different time zones, meeting day and times may vary.**

2021 AGC-BC Upcoming Events

All in-person meetings and events are cancelled until further notice. The following events will be held online via Zoom.

- February 7, **Sunday, 12:00-1:00 pm** -AGC-BC General Meeting,
  - Jim Jermyn: A Look at Japan's Finest Alpine and Woodland Plants
- March 7, **Sunday, 1:00 - 2:30 pm** - AGC-BC General Meeting
  - Barbara Cooper and Bella Seiden: Flora of the Turkish Silk Road
- April 14, **Wednesday, 7:00 - 8:30 pm** - AGC-BC General Meeting
  - Jim Lawrence: Birds, Bears and Blossoms: Kootenay Gardening

For more information, visit http://www.agc-bc.ca/events

From the Editor

Laura Caddy

Hello everyone! I hope this finds you well. As most of us are living in areas with varying ranges of restrictions, I'm sure everyone is itching for spring to arrive so we can get outside and spend more time in the garden. We sure are blessed in Vancouver to have had quite a decent winter for outside work; I've never been more appreciative of the outdoor aspect of my vocation than this past year with all the restrictions in place. As it is seed-sowing-season, I hope everyone is finding the joy of sowing and growing even more satisfying and stress relieving! I even ordered a few packets from our club just for me (normally they are all for the UBC Alpine Garden), so I can sow them at home.

Speaking of the Seed Exchange, thank you to everyone who contributed, volunteered and ordered seed, and to Pam Yokome not only for all her hard work but also providing a report for the Bulletin. Some of you may be a bit surprised or confused when the seeds you contributed or ordered were listed under different names than you'd expect. In this issue our excellent seed intake volunteer, Linda Verbeek, has provided some further information as to why that may be. We are also featuring some images and information provided by Chris Byra regarding his new tufa installation - I'm sure we can all learn from his latest project! And to satisfy, replace, or perhaps tease our members desire to travel (considering the reality of the times), we have reprinted an article from a 2019 family trip to Tasmania by Alan Ayton. Alan is a member of the Alpine Garden Society - Victorian Group (Australia), and this article was provided in an article exchange agreement between ourselves and their group.

In addition to our regular features, you'll also find an In Memoriam included for Dr. Clive Justice. His landscape architecture firm shaped many green spaces in Vancouver, including the E.H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden. I visit those original drawings occasionally for information and inspiration, and sometimes just to appreciation the beauty and vision drafted out for the garden I curate. One can still see the original design intent in the Garden today - a testament to the remarkable design.

Editor’s ID Challenge

Too easy? Too hard? Let me know at bulletin@agc-bc.ca

Club News

Seed Exchange Report

Pam Yokome

The Alpine Garden Club - B.C. was very pleased to continue with our Seed Exchange in 2020 in spite of the world wide pandemic and all of the challenges that entailed. A number of seed exchanges were cancelled or are delayed because of these challenges. Restrictions on travel affected many of our wonderful donations of wild collected seed while rules on gatherings changed the way our intake/packaging/order filling volunteers completed their tasks. We successfully completed all our order-filling/mailing by the second week of January for those requiring phytosanitary certificates and before Christmas for Canadian orders.

The extensive and enticing 2020 seed list was populated by 58 donors from around the world and seeds ordered by 95 of our grateful members. In an effort to expand our membership in Australia we sent a package of excess seed to a newly formed seed exchange in Victoria State, Australia, who were unable to order from any of their usual sources.

Kudos to all our Seed Exchange volunteers from our invaluable and reliable donors; Linda Verbeek, our so knowledgeable Seed Intake volunteer; Pam Frost and her experienced Vancouver chapter; David Sellers with his website expertise; to our Darts Hill Group (especially a newish member Anne Sprung), who finished off in good time.

Spread the word about the availability and reliability of ordering choice seed from our Seed Exchange. We lose a few members that order seed every year and the dearth of exchanges this year has shown an appreciation for them.

In Memoriam

Originally published Published on December 30, 2020, Vancouver Sun

Clive Lionel Justice

August 14, 1926 - December 21, 2020

Clive Lionel Justice, Landscape Architect, Planner, Author and Garden Historian, died in his sleep at his home in Vancouver on December 21, 2020. Son of Clive Charles Maberly Justice and Irene Adelaide (Beddis) Justice, Clive was born on August 14, 1926 at Ganges, Salt Spring Island, BC. Predeceased by his wife, Wanda and brothers David, Rodney and Beverly, Clive is survived by his sons Clive Michael (Elke), Charles (Candace), David (Dana) and Douglas (Karen), grandchildren Matthew, James, Michael, Andrew, Isaac, Moni and Carla, and great-grandchildren Sasha and Zoé, as well as many other family members, friends and associates. Clive used his WWII veteran's education allowance to study Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, where he met and married Wanda Peckinpah. Clive blazed a trail in his professional life in BC as one of the first registered landscape architects in the province, mentoring a number of enthusiastic interns and employees. Among the firm's notable projects were Park & Tilford Gardens and UBC Botanical Garden. Clive was a founding member of the Vancouver Rhododendron Society and active in protecting local parks and Vancouver's heritage trees. A volunteer with Canadian Executive Services Organization, he spent several years after retirement working with park planners in a number of developing countries. Clive was elected a Fellow of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and was an American Rhododendron Society Gold Medal recipient. Ever up for a challenge, Clive entered a PhD program at SFU to study garden history, receiving his doctorate in 2002 at the age of 76. He was a prolific and creative builder and designer and a gifted communicator. He will be remembered for his insatiable appetite for knowledge, sartorial flair (Stetson, western suit and boots, then later, Scottish kilt and related kit), and irrepressible energy, but especially for his service to the community and indomitable force of personality. The family extends deep gratitude to Dr. Margaret McGregor and the Home ViVE program, Kafiyeh (Gulie) Khader, and Clive's skilled home care workers, for their superb care and attention. A celebration of Clive's life will take place at a later date.

The Trials and Tribulations of Naming Plants

Linda Verbeek

People may have wondered why so many items in the seed list have been renamed from the one they were sent in with. Because we use botanical names, and botanical names are scientific, I try to make sure they are up-to-date. The trouble with that is, that scientific names try to do two things. They are a means of ensuring that we all know exactly which plant we're talking about. That in itself is straightforward, and once we'd agreed on a name, we'd never have to change it. Unfortunately (for gardeners) the names are also meant to tell you about the relationships and evolutionary history of the plant, and that's where the trouble comes in. Plants (and all living things) are named in a hierarchical system, with species grouped into genera, genera into families, etc. The idea is that all species in a genus are more closely related – that is, they have a more recent common ancestor – to each other than to other species in a different genus. Similarly, genera within a family are more closely related to each other than to any other genus. Now, unfortunately, nobody was around during that part of evolution, so there is no handy-dandy list of who descended from whom. Thus it becomes a matter of weighing the evidence from similarities, and here nature can be quite the trickster.

The characters of a plant are not only determined by its ancestry, but also by the environment it lives in. The vegetative part of a plant is especially sensitive to the environment. For instance: there are *Euphorbia* in African deserts that look just like cacti, although they are in different families. And in Western Australia we found a whole bunch of plants that looked exactly like heather – until they flowered. Even in the same area they were not all closely related, some were in the Myrtaceae, some in the Rubiaceae, and maybe even others. Flower characters are influenced by how and by whom the plant gets pollinated.

Ever since Linnaeus (in 1754) started to use the current system of naming plants, botanists have struggled with this problem, and every time they learn about new aspects of plant life, this gets fed into the evaluation of relationships, and may lead to new arrangements – and therefore to new names. Originally, taxonomy (the science of naming organisms) was based almost completely on anatomical characters, like leaf shapes or the number of stamens, and later more

sophisticated ones like the way the ovules are arranged in the ovary. Once people started understanding more of the chemistry and physiology of plants, they started to use those, too. And sometimes one set of data contradicts another, and then you have to decide which may be ancestral and which are more likely to be environmentally driven. And now we have DNA and in the last 20 years or so it has become much easier to determine similarities in DNA. So there has been a big push to use this technique, and it has led to a lot more revisions. The theory is that DNA mutations don't reverse themselves, so if two plants have the same mutation in a stretch of DNA, and a third one doesn't, the first two have a common ancestor that they don't share with the third one, i.e. the common ancestor of all three of them existed longer ago than the common ancestor of the first two. It is still a case of weighing the evidence, and not all researchers reach the same conclusion, even if they all have the same data.

I have been following the lead of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, mostly because they are the oldest institute to index plant names. Before the internet, there was something called *Index Kewensis*, first published in 1893, which listed all the scientific names ever given to plants (since Linnaeus), with a reference to where it was published, and later, if it had been turned into a synonym. It got rather clumsy, since they couldn't republish the original bulky volumes, so all the later updates went into successive supplements and you'd have to check them all. The online system is much easier – but of course that also means that everyone gets to know it sooner and ends up changing things.

And I don't know why, but even the Kew Index (called Plants of the World Online, if anyone is interested), sometimes can't make up its mind. I really cursed this fall: last year most, but not all *Pulsatilla* were transferred to *Anemone*, and I duly changed the names – in the seed list and also in my filing system. This year, the same index put them all in *Pulsatilla* again. I am no taxonomist, so I am really not qualified to make those kinds of decisions, but I like *Pulsatilla* much better. And I refuse, even for Kew, to call Shooting Stars *Primula*.

It has not only been genera that have been targeted – even families get altered and divided and rearranged, but that has no effect on species names. It does still boggle the mind that *Penstemon* is now in the Plantaginaceae (Plantain family), but I'm still looking forward to the day when it gets taken out of there again.

Tasmania: Its Plants and Mountains: Part 1

Alan Ayton

Originally published in *Journal of the Alpine Garden Society Victorian Group*, June, 2019.

A three week family holiday last Sept/October opened up to us the wonders of this smallest of states of our great southern land we call home. I realize now that we have only just scratched the surface of what Tasmania has to offer in flora, fauna, scenery, history, produce and just great hospitality. It has left a yearning desire to return, again and again. We hope that we can just do that. I hope you enjoy this fast ride in a four wheel drive through some highlights of what we saw.

Mount Field National Park

In planning our trip we had to factor in one of our teenagers tendencies to hurtle down a mountain on a bike! (i.e. mountain biking). My wife has this tendency as well but not to the same level of enthusiasm as Blake has! This led us to Maydena which is a small town on the way to the Gordon Dam, which is also just past Mount Field National Park. So after researching online with google and social media we decided to camp at Mount Field. This would accommodate those who would mountain bike at Maydena and those who would want to walk amongst some wonderful scenery and plant life. Well that would be me dragging a couple of kids up to Lake Dobson to do the Pandani Grove walk amongst a touch of snow!

Mount Field is unusual (this also happens in other parts of Tasmania) because as you rise in altitude the plant diversity increases, you also pass through three distinct plant communities and at the top is another zone called the Alpine Mosaic. The lower zone up to about 700m contains tall open forest with *Eucalyptus regnans* and/or *E*. *obliqua* with a wet understory and plenty of *Dicksonia antarctica* and *Olearia argophylla*. The middle zone from roughly 700m up to 900m is a mixed rainforest with *Nothofagus cunninghamii* (Myrtle Beech) and *Atherosperma moschatum* (Southern Sassafras) with Phyllocladus aspleniifolius (Celery Top Pine) as the understory.

The upper zone from about 850m to 1220m is sub alpine woodland which is dominated by *Eucalyptus coccifera* (Tasmanian Snow gum). I wasn't coming up here for the Snow Gum, but rather the amazing understory plants at this altitude, primarily the, *Richea pandanifolia* (Pandani), and the conifers, *Athrotaxis cupressoides* (Pencil Pine), *Athrotaxis selaginoides* (King Billy Pine), and several dwarf pines as well, pineapple grass and a host of lichens, moss and other organisms which create a tapestry of green layers throughout the forest. Of course at the top of Mount Field there are alpine lakes and tarns that support other plant communities of cushion plants, sphagnum bogs, herb fields and heath communities. Unfortunately I never got that high to see them due to lack of time!

The Pandani are interesting to say the least, a quick first glance may confuse you as it may look like a cross between a bromeliad and a palm (they do to me!). These will grow up to 12 metres and usually have only one trunk (a sub species is known to branch), and it has persistent old leaves. Inflorescences emerge from the leaf axils from November till January and are red or pink. Leaves are 30cm to 150cm long and tapering.

Seeing these in groups standing tall like sentinels is quite something to behold.

Above left: Spent infloresence of *R. pandanifolia*. Above Right: *Astelia alpina* var. *alpina* with patches of snow. Also known as Pineapple grass because of the tufted rosettes. It can form large mats around bogs and other wet areas and spreads by rhizomes. This is also endemic. The below image gives you a feel for what the understory in this sub alpine environment is like. Notice the Pandani towering above in the background.

The Pandani Grove walk is an easy 1.5km circuit around Lake Dobson, easily done in about 45 minutes, longer depending on how often one stops for photos and botanising! It's at an altitude of 1040m and can snow at any time of the year, patches of snow were evident late September and the peaks still had a lot of snow cover on them as well. Lake Dobson is a 14km drive on a dirt road from the Mount Field Visitor centre, narrow, steep and slippery when wet in places but well worth it with careful driving. On the way down we came across some unfortunate tourists who had slid off the road with their car sitting on a 60 degree angle over the edge, luckily the forest is so thick it didn't go any further.

Here's a bit more information about Mount Field National Park. It is one of Tasmania's oldest National Parks founded in 1916 and one of the most visited and loved National Parks. Being only an hour from Hobart makes it very accessible. It has some of the most varied features and flora of any National Park in Australia. Some of its features include three beautiful waterfalls; Lady Barron Falls, Horseshoe Falls and Russell Falls, which are the most visited Falls in Tasmania. It has some of the tallest flowering trees in the world - *Eucalyptus regnans*, incredible endemic plants, a glaciated landscape, incredible fungi, glow worms and many other features. No wonder it was added to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area in 2013. Above is the cool waters of Lake Dobson. Anyone fancy a dip!

On the way back down we came across a river of rocks. This is a dolerite boulder field with the Lady Barron creek flowing deep beneath it. The boulders are flowing (very slowly) as well in what is called a block stream, they are helped along by frost and the flowing water beneath them. The rocks are levered off the cliffs above by frost as well. In the photo on the right you can see the river slowly moving down the mountain!

Another plant of interest I came across at Mount Field National Park was *Nothofagus gunnii* (Deciduous Beech), the only native tree with leaves that change colour and fall. It is a small tree growing 1.5-5m tall, normally no more than two metres tall depending on the conditions it's in. Small ovate like leaves which look like crinkle cut chips turn rust red through golden yellow in Autumn, small insignificant flowers in December. One of its common names is called Tanglefoot, above you can see why! Hard to get through and it certainly can tangle your feet up!

Down the bottom of Mount Field National Park you can do the tall trees walk, this is a 1km loop through some of the world's tallest flowering plants commonly called Swamp Gum in Tassie and Mountain Ash in Victoria, known everywhere as *Eucalyptus regnans*. This one was about 78 metres tall and the bases on them are just massive with huge buttresses. They regularly grow to 85 metres plus and the tallest at present (which has been found and living) is called Centurion and stands at 100.5 metres. They are quite possibly 400-500years old. I have since learnt that Centurion has been moderately damaged by fire in the recent fires in the Southwest Wilderness area as well as another 20 plus giants destroyed, either dead or collapsed. Not to mention the vast tracks of alpine vegetation that has suffered as well.

The *Eucalyptus regnans* on the right had very distinct buttresses, simply incredible. Surrounded by massive *Dicksonia antarctica* we were just tiny specs in a giant's landscape. I also visited the Styx Valley Forest Reserve where the famous tree sit-ins occurred during the 1980's. I am glad they did this because I will never forget the awe of standing by myself under these 85-90m behemoths in a world of silence apart from bird calls and insects chirping, a magic experience. It pains me to say that logging in these old growth forests continues to this day, such a waste.

The Gordon River Road

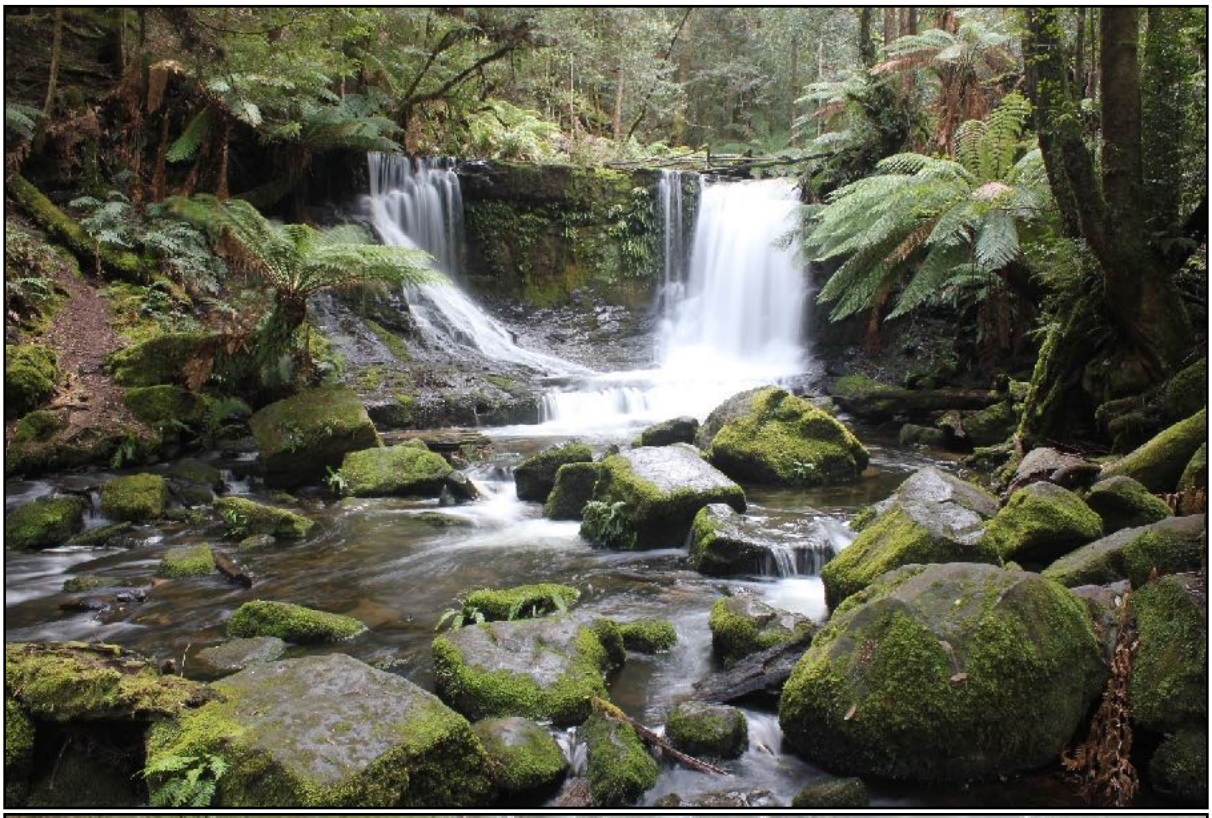
This road passes Mount Field and continues on to Strathgordon and gives you a taste of the Southwest National Park and the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park. These areas contain vast tracts of pure wilderness with no roads, a few huts and walking tracks only. The mountains here are not high compared to the mainland but are so rugged and wild they look like they are from somewhere else in the world. The photo below is of the Sentinel Range, a truly wild looking range. Behind this is Lake Pedder and then the Western Arthurs, which contains some really beautiful scenery but in a very tough landscape and not easily accessible. You can google the Western Arthurs and Lake Oberon to get an idea of what it looks like. The top of the following page is Serpentine Reach on Lake Pedder looking looking towards the Frankland Range.

Unfortunately, it was overcast and raining as it normally is in this part of Tasmania. Rain falls on average 250 days per year with areas in the Southwest National Park receiving 3 metres annually. It is also situated in The Roaring Forties, so it can be very windy. Sunshine in winter time is also limited with an average of 1 hour per day. Doesn't sound very inspiring does it? Yet the scenery more than makes up for the weather.

The photo below is looking towards another rugged range in the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park over the Buttongrass Plains. *Gymnoschoenus sphaerocephalus* (Buttongrass), is a tussock forming sedge with leaves up to 50cm in length, cream coloured flower heads maturing to brown from September to February on stems to 1 metre. It grows in damp poor soils and is the dominant plant on the Buttongrass Plains, hence the name. Widespread throughout the western half of Tasmania.

Above left: Moving back to Mount Field National Park, it's very hard to show in a photo the size of these *Eucalyptus regnans* but this one gives you a good idea.
Above right and below: Lichen and mosses were everywhere, coating any surface that wasn't moving. A very rich tapestry of greenery.

To finish I must include some photos of the great waterfalls at Mount Field National Park: Horseshoe Falls above and Russell Falls below.



I hope you have enjoyed this glimpse into a tiny part of Tasmania.
To be continued…..

A Covid 19 Tufa Project

Chris Byra

About six years ago, I envisioned a tufa wall on a slope of crumbling sedimentary rock near our house. The area was used for storage of lumber, plants, rocks, and other paraphernalia. We already have a relatively level tufa garden in a turnaround in front of the house but many of these small saxifrages and other alpines are best viewed at eye level on a vertical face. Inspiration came from the gardens of several club members (Krystof, Sellars, Darts Hill) and from photos of Harry Jans tufa walls in the Netherlands. In conjunction with an order for Darts Hill Garden and a couple of others we obtained five crates of tufa [half were larger pieces and the rest 30 to 60 cm (1 to 2') in size] plus two large two-person pieces. They sat next to and on top of this slope/wall of crumbling rock, stumps and soil since then. Last fall I ran out of excuses and diversions and with a little help got started.

The project area. One small section of the bluff was stable so we endeavoured to expose this surface with the native sword ferns (*Polystichum munitum*) in the final project.

The area consisted of the somewhat shaded west facing bluff about 3 meters (10’) high and a low ridge on the west that gently sloped north. For stability and in order to preserve our supply of tufa we added a layer of available large rocks as a base row. This allowed for a deeper layer of Sechelt sand to improve drainage and to raise the level of the garden. The plan was to use the largest tufa rocks vertically and create north or northeast faces for plantings of saxifrages. Included in the ad hoc plan were steps up to a pathway across much of the face.

We started on the west wing by removing rock and debris and adding some turf blend (½ compost and ½ sand) in low areas and topping it with 15 to 30 cm (6 to 12”) of Sechelt sand. Buried in the sand was a loop of 1.25 cm (½”) pressure compensated drip line with drippers 30 cm (12”) apart. On the mound of sand we began placing tufa pieces, starting with one of the large ones. This required the use of ropes, a come-along anchored up in a tree and well placed supporting rocks to fix the boulder in an upright position with an over-hanging main surface. The remaining rocks were moved using a dolly, crowbar, expletives, and gentle physical labour.

Above: West bed with irrigation.

Below: First large boulder in west bed.

Placement of boulder base.

The placement of the rocks for steps and as a stable base for the highest part of the wall was the next step. The selection of which tufa piece to place next is somewhat haphazard in general but where the tufa was to meet the original rock face, more care was needed. The interface had to be stable but also aesthetically pleasing to Jane's eye. The tufa that we used has a very rough surface which greatly assisting with stability, as the surfaces will not slip easily. We decided to use lightly studded 2.13 m (7') T-posts anchored into the rocky fill behind the boulders to fasten to any unstable tufa. One of the goals was to create as many aspects as possible to accommodate plants light needs. Larger pieces were anchored to the fence posts with stainless steel strapping. We used 5 cm (2") roofing screws impact driven into the tufa. Several times the screw would hit a soft part of the tufa thus stripping and no longer binding. We had to avoid over tightening the screws.

Four levels of drip line were placed behind the tufa as we moved along the face. Care was needed in order to avoid pinching the line, especially with some of the heavier rocks; fingers crossed. Another challenge with the site was the presence of two large *Acer macrophyllum* stumps. Perhaps foolishly, we decided to cut them at ground level and build the bed over them with about 30 cm of sand on top. Time will tell if settling occurs. A walking shelf was incorporated about half way up the slope to allow access for planting and viewing of the upper part of the face.

Above left: Fence post anchors with stainless straps.

Above right: Anchoring of rock over stump.

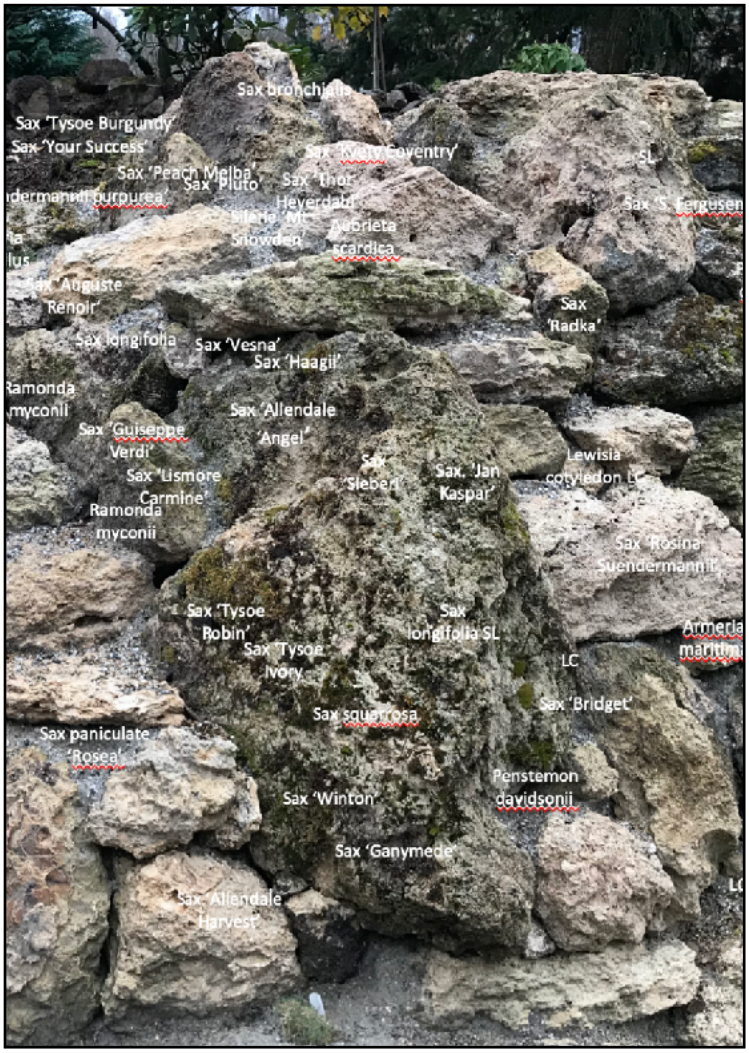
Lower right: Steps and path along slope are marked in yellow.

It was now late November and planting began in earnest. We had accumulated about 400 saxifrages and other rooted cuttings as well as plants divided from our other beds. Many of the saxifrages were planting in 10 cm (4”) deep holes, 1.9 cm (3/4”) in diameter drilled into the tufa. The tufa dust and grindings from the holes mixed with sand became the planting medium. A 30 cm (12”) long piece of 1.25 cm (½”) irrigation line with the first 15 cm (6”) top half removed provides a planting tube that fits into the hole. The depth is first measured to properly place the rooted cutting on the ½ tube with damp medium filling the remainder. After inserting the plant into the hole, I use a finger to hold the plant in place while I slide the tube out. More medium is packed into the hole around the plant using the eraser end of a pencil. Small tufa chips are placed at the mouth of the hole to hold the plant in place.

Planting with modified irrigation line.

Tufa mulch, made up of small chips, will be added after more of the sandy areas between rocks are planted, next year.

Taxa that have been planted so far include *Arenaria tetraquetra* and *A. alfacarensis*, *Daphne* sp., *Antennaria* sp., some bulbs, *Silene acaulis*, *Phyteuma* sp., *Ramonda* sp., *Campanula* sp., *Dryas* sp., *Sempervivum* sp., *Penstemon* sp. and others. *Saxifraga longifolia*, my favourite, has been planted in several of the rocks. In lieu of labels for plants imbedded in the rock we take photographs, put them into PowerPoint, and label the plants on the photo - a trick we learned from David Sellars.



Above left: Placing large boulders around irrigation lines.

Above right: Labeled plants.

Below: Current view of project.

The actual gardening of the bed is just beginning and hopefully in a few years the bluff will more look like a garden than a rock pile.

Bulbs in pots

David Sellars

Being able to enjoy flowers in January and February is a prime motivation for growing bulbs in pots. The early *Narcissus* such as *N. romieuxii* and *N. cantabricus* are wonderful winter flowers. You can also enjoy some of the most desirable *Fritillaria* such as *F. bucharica* and *F. stenanthera*.

I basically follow the growing advice contained in Ian Young's bulb log: https://www.srgc.org.uk/logs/. Unfortunately the key information is buried in the 144 documents but a Google search can help to locate specific details.

For the potting mix and also for sowing, I use equal parts of Sechelt Sand, sifted leaf mould and 6 mm coarse grit. I also add a sprinkling of bone meal. Pots are topped off with a layer of the coarse grit. Seed pots are left outside in the winter and brought inside the greenhouse when the thin grass-like leaves appear. I use a diluted tomato fertilizer (high in potash) to feed the seedlings. After two or three years in a bulb frame I repot the seedling bulbs into clay pots. The first flowering is usually a year or two later.

Immediately after flowering I sprinkle sulphate of potash (0-0-50) on the surface of the pot which is then washed down with subsequent waterings. After the leaves have died down the pots are kept cool and dry until September 1st when the first storm (intense watering) is applied. For *Fritillaria*, the first storm is applied on October 1st as we sometimes get warm Septembers that could cause a damp bulb to rot.

In recent years some of our *Narcissus* have not been flowering well and the solution was complete repotting when the bulbs are dormant in August. I have read that repotting should be carried out every year but that seems rather onerous and every two or three years should be sufficient.

Gardens ROCK

While it seems a long time from sowing bulb seed to a flowering pot, once you get started there is something happening every year. It's a fascinating process and doesn't take up a lot of space. The AGC-BC seed exchange has some excellent choices so next fall, put some bulb seed on your request list!

Above left: *Fritillaria stenanthera*
Above right: *Tulipa cretica*
Lower right: *Narcissus bulbocodium* var *pallidus*

Editor's ID Challenge

Well, folks - what do you think? Do you know it? I'm sure family and genus are familiar to many. They are many (~360 species) in this genus, and perhaps their most recognizable trait is the three upright 'standards' (petals) and three lower 'falls' (sepals, which may be 'bearded' in some species).

Due to the vast diversity in this genus, sections have been assigned to further group the species within it. Ours is in the Reticulata Section (though is not the type species of this section). One of the significant differences between this section and others is that members in this section grow from a bulb surrounded by a netted tunic (as opposed to the more common rhizome).

Breeding has provided an array of cultivated selections in this group, both historically and more recently by Canadian Alan McMurtrie, who has contributed to the Bulletin and provided presentations to our group. However, our mystery plant is a species, in fact one that is a parent to such horticultural gems as *Iris* 'George' and *I.* 'Katharine Hodgkin'. If you guess *Iris histrio,* you would be very close! In fact, the specific epithet of our plant means 'resembles *histrio*'. But, the timing of the flower buds and leaf emergence (among other details) separates it from that species.

Iris histrioides grows in the UBC Alpine Garden's bulb frame, and was in last years Seed Exchange.