

Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia



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Upcoming Events

Nov 12th, 2014 Ron Long: Alpine Photography. A *how to* lecture on how to get the most from your camera and your shots. Note- this is not a workshop but should kick-start and improve your photography of plants especially alpiners. Ron Long is a retired scientific photographer and an active field photographer with a special interest in Pink Mountain. This area is one that he is active (along with the support of the AGCBC) in procuring ecological preserve status from the provincial government.

Dec 10th, 2014 Christmas Pot Luck Supper and Rare Plant Auction fundraiser.

January 15th, 2015 Dana Cromie: Botanical Illustration The UBC Botanical Garden Artist-In-Residence and longtime AGCBC member talks about botanical illustration. Dana had a show, **remnants- a visual history of human progress**, this past Spring at the Beaty Gallery.



FRIDAY, February 20th, Peter Korn "Rock Garden" The Swedish King of Sandbed Construction will use his recently published book, www.peterkornstradgard.se/book.html, to illustrate a bold, ecological style.



Peter Korn on left talking to bulb maven, **Ian Young**

Links of Interest

<http://www.niwaki.com/blog/2014/05/25/tokyo-disney-land/> Who knew that Disneyland Japan would have so many beautifully pruned and shaped trees? Wow! Thanks to **Jake Hobson** at Niwaki Tree Nursery in the UK for the pix.

Frank Schmidt has an informative page on cultivation of plants and their needs within categories. <http://www.floralpin.de/engl/references-of-cultivation/index.php>

Our President, **David Sellars**, has a good article, **Cresta de le Sele: A high point for alpine flora** in the September 2014 edition of the International Rock Gardener. David and Wendy made their way to the eastern Dolomites this past summer. Read here: <http://www.srgc.org.uk/logs/logdir/2014Sep251411672305IRG57.pdf>

Also appearing recently in the August edition of the IRG was an in-depth article on *Campanula choruhensis* by yours truly. <http://www.srgc.org.uk/logs/logdir/2014Aug281409242117IRG56.pdf>

ROCK ON!

Another very dry Summer here on the west coast, highlights the importance of alpine as a prime drought-tolerant/xeriscape component. Bulbs of every type, *Lewisia*, *Penstemon*, *Dianthus*, and so many more mountain-loving genera take the drought in stride through a variety of strategies. This makes it so much easier for the rock gardener as well as the earth (in this case the aquifer), doesn't it? Still, structure in the design is important and there are, indeed, many ways to skin the alpine gardening cat. I really didn't think that my previous garden in the N. Okanagan would provide such a bevy of plants suited to the Mediterranean clime of the south-east coast of Van Isle. Throw in a little more mildness and you have the ingredients for being adventurous with bulbs in the open garden. South African bulbs were always just a dream in my previous garden due to the cold. However, there are many S. African genera that seem to take things in stride including *Babiana*, *Geranium*, *Gladiolus*, *Ornithogalum* and *Watsonia* to name a few. Of course the innings are young and the old ball game of truth is far from over.

The inevitable turn in this discussion is that of hardiness. I chuckle to remember the expression on the faces of my students at Okanagan U. when I said that a bigger question in the N. Okanagan was NOT Winter hardiness but Summer hardiness! Oh for afternoon shade (Ponderosa pine or fir) and that Siren of soils well-drained but nutrient -rich and relatively moisture-retentive. It may seem counter-intuitive to many to realize that many *woody plants* from the Sino-Himalayan area actually do better in the N. Okanagan (with its colder Winters) than in much of the UK because of **summer ripening of wood** and dependable snow cover (which is not a given from Kelowna on down to Osoyoos). I remember **Martyn Rix** being the first to emphasize this dynamic in his 1989 publication, The Random House Book of Shrubs. With the long Summers here in Yellow Pt. and the lovely early Fall weather, this area too can provide excellent summer ripening of wood for shrubs. Dependable snow cover? Not a chance. Visiting Martyn and his lovely wife Alison in Devon a few years ago was terrific.

For the next issue, I would like any members to email me and name the best alpine plant (or plants) that they've grown in the last few years and explain why. I'm going to do a compendium of the results for our big Winter issue (58-1). Kindly include pix.

Shirley Gillam, widow of Ian, has donated \$1000 to the club as a token of appreciation for all of the fun Ian had as a stalwart member of the club. Thank you Shirley.

Finally, I want to wish everyone Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year. Might I also suggest that you gift friends or family with a membership in the AGCBC? Here is the link: <http://www.agc-bc.ca/membership-signup> Let's keep growing our membership!

- Grahame Ware, Editor

Goodbye Mr. Mimulus
by Grahame Ware



Diplacus calycina from Tulare Co., Sherman Pass 5500' (Alplains Seed)

The pic above is a plant that I grew as seed from Alplains Seeds and received as *Mimulus longiflorus*. There has been a significant amount of work done on this genus over the past decade spurred on in no small measure by the second edition of the Jepson Manual, the definitive flora of California. Jepson 2 came out in February 2012.

In doing background on this plant I became suspicious of its identity. What I found out when I started scratching was that major changes were afoot in this genus. For starters, the whole sectionalizing/taxonomy has been revised to come in line with all historical priorities. As a result, the shrubby and sub-shrubby members of this section are now placed in the genus *Diplacus*. The recent Tulig and Nesom authored Phytoneuron article concluded that *Mimulus longiflorus* is indeed *Diplacus calycina*. Link here to full article: <http://www.phytoneuron.net/PhytoN-sectDiplacus.pdf>

See below here for the pertinent section from the article:

Diplacus calycinus Eastw., Bot. Gaz. (Crawfordsville) 41: 287. 1906. *Mimulus longiflorus* var. *calycinus* (Eastw.) A.L. Grant, Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 11: 331. 1924. *Diplacus longiflorus* var. *calycinus* (Eastw.) Jeps., Man. Fl. Pl. Calif. 919. 1925. *Mimulus longiflorus* (subsp. *calycinus* (Eastw.) Munz, Aliso 4: 99. 1958. **TYPE: USA. California.** Tulare Co.: South Fork Kaweah River, 6000 ft, 22 Jul 1904, G.N. Culbertson 4407 [distributed by C.F. Baker, No. 4407] (holotype: CAS digital image!; isotypes: CAS digital image!, GH, K, MO digital image!, NY digital image!, PH digital image!, POM, UC, US digital image!).

Distribution. San Luis Obispo, Los Angeles, San Bernadino, and Riverside Co, separated from a Sierran population system in Fresno, Tulare, and Kern cos. Although first described as a separate species, *Diplacus calycinus* has more recently been treated at subspecific or varietal rank within *D. longiflorus* (Grant 1924; Pennell 1951; Munz 1973). Thompson (2005) went even further in including *D. calycinus* simply as a synonym within his concept of *Mimulus aurantiacus* var. *pubescens* (= *D. longiflorus*), but results from the Tulig PCA and DFA indicate that *D. calycinus* is distinct from *D. longiflorus*, especially in corolla length, corolla tube length, and style length. **Corolla color is cream to pale yellow in *D. calycinus* and salmon in *D. longiflorus*.**

Diplacus calycinus and *D. longiflorus* are essentially allopatric to parapatric. The type of *D. calycinus* is a Sierran plant from Tulare County.

Despite the recent comprehensive work on *Mimulus* to sort things out as to what's what in the taxonomic world formerly known as *Mimulus*, one thing caught my eye as I waded through all of the historical information. *Mimulus aurantiacus* was authored by Curtis in 1796 and the picture that he uses (see p 83) is not of *Mimulus aurantiacus* (now known as *Diplacus aurantiacus*) but seems to me that it is *Diplacus calycina*. The distinctive staminode (not a feature of *D. aurantiacus*) is the giveaway. I have also found an *alba* sport of *D. aurantiacus* that is particularly vigorous & floriferous.



Diplacus calycina

It is a good garden perennial and performs similarly well to *Diplacus aurantiacus*. *D. aurantiacus* is pollinated by bees but *D. calycina* by hummingbirds. I've found it to be a very long-flowering species and it does very well in my sandstone "soil" and full sun here in Yellow Pt. Many writers mention its marginal hardiness as a stopper but I have not found that to be a problem (thus far!) here at Yellow Pt.

I will have more to say on this genus and the taxonomic revisions in future editions of the Bulletin.

SOME ORCHIDS OF THE PICOS DE EUROPA

by David Sellars

Orchids in the high alpine meadows. Orchids in the valleys. Orchids in ditches and orchids in roadside verges. We had arrived in the Picos de Europa to find endemic Saxifrages but we kept running into spectacular orchids with ostentatious floral spikes and flowers mimicking the appearance of insects.

The Orchidaceae family are considered to be the most highly evolved family of flowering plants with over 25,000 species. The reasons for this diversity are complex but it is notable that orchids are pollinated by a greater variety of pollinators than any other family of plants.

See here: <http://phys.org/news177838192.html>

Native European orchids exhibit remarkable flowers carried on a single stem and one of the orchid flower petals forms a lip that points downwards, providing a landing platform for insects.

The Picos de Europa in Northern Spain is a well-known region for wild orchids and provides ideal habitat.

<http://www.iberianwildlife.com/picos-europa/orchid-list-picos-europa.htm>

Terrestrial orchids prefer moist but well-drained meadows in limestone areas. The high rainfall of the Picos de Europa (due to the Atlantic maritime influence) ensures that water supply is plentiful and the orchids tend not to be disturbed because of the low human population density.

On our trip to the Picos de Europa in late May and early June 2014, we found orchids in two habitat types; 1) high alpine meadows well above tree line and; 2) in open meadows in the valleys.

The orchids in the high alpine meadows were elegant spires of varying subtle shades of pink including *Dactylorhiza fuchsia*, *Dactylorhiza incarnata*, *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and *Orchis mascula*.

The most striking was *Orchis ustulata*, the Burnt Orchid, so-called because of the blackened appearance of the top of the flower spike which can be very striking as you can see in the photo at the top of page 85.



Orchis ustulata

The alpine orchids were growing along with other meadow plants such as *Trollius europaeus*, *Narcissus nobilis* and *Fritillaria pyrenaica*.

While the alpine meadow orchids were a delight the most astounding plants were in the valleys, sometimes in roadside ditches and often on well-drained meadows. Finding a huge, tasseled Lizard Orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*) in a ditch is a startling experience. The impressively long central lip of the flower, clearly seen in the photo below, has two side lobes, which look like the legs and tail of a lizard.



Himantoglossum hircinum, the Lizard orchid

A few feet away in the same ditch there were a number of exotic Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*). Bee Orchids have evolved flowers that mimic the look and smell of female bees to attract male bees for pollination. The photo at the top of page 87 shows one of the flowers with pink sepals that look like wings and furry, brown lips that have yellow bee-like markings.



Ophrys apifera, the Bee orchid

In a wet, steeply sloping meadow, we found Early Spider Orchids (*Ophrys sphegodes*) and Sawfly Orchids (*Ophrys tenthredinifera*). Both have a somewhat similar appearance to the Bee Orchid. Other exotic species at this site included Man Orchids (*Orchis anthropophora*) which have flowers that are tiny figurines with bodies, arms and legs. Another large meadow in a drier location was decorated with groups of Pink Butterfly Orchids (*Orchis papilionacea*) with their large flowers resembling pink butterflies.



Orchis papilionacea, Butterfly orchid

On the last day, we found a small meadow with hundreds of Tongue Orchids (*Serapias lingua*) and some Bee Orchids right beside the road. *Lingua* is Latin for tongue, and is a reference to the tongue-like form of the lower lip apparent in the photo. Climbing over the roadside metal barrier, we marveled at the incredible sight of Tongue and Bee Orchids so close to a major highway.



Serapias lingua, Tongue orchid

Charles “Peter” Bailey *In Memoriam*



Peter Bailey 1930-2014

by Grahame Ware

The AGCBC has just lost one of its best practitioners in the art of rock gardening with the passing of Charles “Peter” Bailey in Armstrong, BC September 25th. During his 40 year working career as Canada’s leading researcher in animal nutrition at the Canadian government’s Lethbridge research unit, he published over 55 scientific articles. He was a Vancouver boy that graduated from UBC with a Masters before gaining a PhD from Reading U in farm animal physiology. Away from work, he became a member of the Chinook Outdoor Club of Lethbridge and the Alpine Club of Canada. It wasn’t long before he took up membership in both the AGCBC and NARGS. During his tenure in the Lethbridge foothills, he found some nicely coloured forms of *Penstemon nitidus* and *P. albertinus* that he brought to BC in 1989 after retirement upon moving to Armstrong.

There he and his wife Mary chose a lovely property on a rocky shelf above the Hullcar valley north of Armstrong. It was here that he really developed and perfected his love of rock gardening. It was around this time that I met Peter due to discovering his name in the AGCBC membership lists and phoning him. We hit it off and fed off each others’ rock gardening enthusiasm sharing plants and cultivation ideas and going in on seed orders to the likes of Halda, Pavelka, Osyany, Kelaidis, Ratko, Bradshaw and Sembol. In a sense, the arc of alpine gardening was synchronized in our relationship.

Choosing a sunny site anchored by two large Ponderosa pines, Peter developed the most beautiful private rock garden I’ve ever seen. When Josef Halda stayed with him in September 1994 (after his talk at the Vandusen and the AGCBC), he was elated when Halda said that this was the best rock garden he had seen in North America! Halda was a hero to him- as he was to many- especially since he was not just an explorer but a terrific crevice boulder rock garden creator (he inspired the likes of the current King of crevice garden design, ZZ). It was a young garden but had such a tasteful array of alpine plants especially Turkish and C. Asian species. Peter succeeded with difficult genera such as *Acantholimon*, *Androsace*, *Astragalus* (both C. Asian and Cordilleran), *Callianthemum*, *Chorispura*, *Convolvulus*, *Dictamnus*, *Dracocephalum* especially *paulsenii*, all types of Halda’s *Gentiana* spp. including *decumbens* and *grandiflora*, *Iris bloudowii*, *I. humilis*, many *Paeonia* spp., etc., etc. They grew to perfection in his open N. Okanagan garden.

On this shale ledge, Peter used all of the natural cracks and fissures. With just a bar and shovel, he would lift out thick, flat chunks and then, after sifting through soil on his property with a small sieve, he would add a little cow manure and coarse sand from a local pit. Finally Peter would replace the rock and top up the crevices and ready it for planting. I introduced him to the Hori Hori knife that I scored from a supplier in Oregon and it rarely left his hands. This construction approach was like a rocky, jigsaw puzzle deconstructed then reconstructed over an undulating 100’ x 100’ area. It was bloody hard work but it suited Peter to finally be strong again after the heart attack and double by-pass operation that had accelerated his retirement.

Paraquilegia microphylla and many other species were directly sown into position upon receipt of seed, then tended through the seedling stage until they achieved 89

stability and flowering. Everything was grown in the open. No pots. The whole effect was that the garden looked completely natural.

Besides the direct sowing method, Peter's usual method for seed propagation was simple. He had a raised (waist high on PT 4x4s) plunge bed attached to his garden shed. Using 2 1/4" rose pots (McConkey- bought from my nursery surplus), his seeds were sown in them immediately upon receipt, cheek by jowl, labelled in pencil and left to the elements. The difficult germinators would always yield a few seedlings even if it took 2-3 years and that was enough for Peter. He was an avid seed collector and provided quality seed over the decades to both the AGCBC, NARGS and the SRGC.

Peter was a generous and progressive minded man but was humble and elegant in his spirit and manner. When he left his rock garden in Hullcar after nearly 20 years and moved into the city of Armstrong, he and his wife Mary found a new house that had a steep south-facing shale bluff at the north end of the property. For most prospective buyers, this would be an instant 'No!'. For Peter, however, this was just the ticket to quickly establish another stunning rock garden. Many *Penstemon* spp. and various rare *Linum* spp. held sway here along with many species of *Fritillaria*. Peter had a particularly good form of *F. aurea* that grew in little pockets of shale. I'd never seen such a chunky form with such a good colour. It was wild-collected by Mojmir Pavelka. A few years ago, Peter collected seed of this form and gifted me. I now have many seedlings but they've yet to flower. Hopefully they will flower this Spring, reviving memories of Peter and his sunny and golden disposition.

Many people from the club did not know Peter well because of his relative isolation, but those that did visit him at his Hullcar rock garden were duly impressed.

He is sorely missed. Peter is survived by his wife Mary (Ellison), son Roger and daughters, Monica and Seasonn and their offspring.



Josef Halda, Peter's hero, woodcut engraving by his wife Jarmila via ZZ