

Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia



Narcissus 'White Marvel'

Vol. 58-4 Fall 2015 Bulletin

INDEX 58-4

EVENTS UPCOMING p 67

ROCK ON! pp 67-9

Feature articles

Observations of some commercially available *Narcissus* Part 2- G. Ware pp 70-74

Cyclamen cultivation on the SW Coast of British Columbia- W & C Bischoff pp 75-79

Pink Mountain seed supplement info- Ron Long p 80

EVENTS

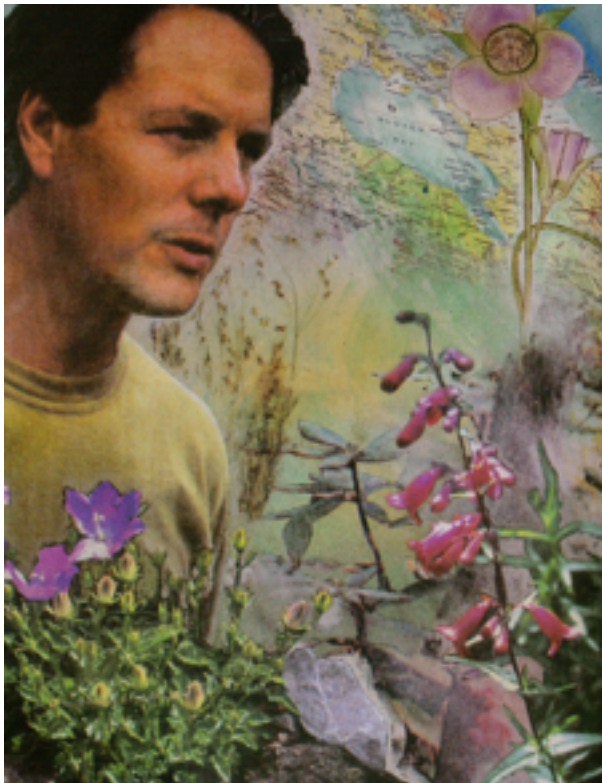
Nov. 11th, 2015 Paul Spriggs, David Douglas in N. America. Spriggs is the owner/ operator of the landscaping firm Spriggs Gardens in Victoria, British Columbia. He's been building crevice gardens around the Capital region for the past 10 years.

Nov. 11th, AGM The election of officers will take place.

December 9th, Howard Wills, *Sempervivum* and Related Genera. Wills holds the National Collection of *Sempervivum* and *Jovibarba* at his nursery in Torrington, Devon.

January 13th, 2016 Annual Rare Plant Auction

ROCK ON!



This will be my last Rock On! for the Quarterly Bulletin. It is now I that is rocking on. After 3 years and approximately 300 pages of the Quarterly Bulletin, time constraints

coupled with shifting priorities have conspired to make being the editor an impossible task- at least doing it in the way that I operate. This role has allowed me to share as much as I could both as a writer and an editor. I was also able to draw on my photo library and create pieces that were fresh and with a decidedly west coast perspective. I also wanted to make the Bulletin a publication that was making a real contribution within alpine horticulture. I've tried to make the Bulletin integrative, informative and exciting. I have lived and breathed this position and enjoyed it immensely. Good luck to the next person that takes it on. I hope they enjoy doing this as much as I have.

I imagine that I will occasionally contribute features to the Bulletin, the IRG and the AGS Quarterly. So too will I do presentations and workshops from time to time. However, with other activities in my life that demand attention like the Owl's Nest B & B as well as my sculpture, that doesn't leave enough time to be an editor as well as cultivate my garden and property.

Thanks to everyone that has contributed to the Bulletin during my tenure. Additional kudos are in order to the late Ian Gillam for his early help and assistance, David and Wendy Sellars for their proofing and distribution and Lynn Batt for her work on the print edition. You guys have been terrific.

Long Hot Summer

Summer fatigue. You know, too much of a good thing. We welcomed the drop in temps and the rain. Ahhhh. Finally. There are always winners and losers no matter what Nature throws at our gardens. Some of my *Penstemon* decided to take a year off from flowering. After successive summers of great displays they went into *refusnik* mode. However, my *Diplacus* (syn. *Mimulus*) spp. revelled in the daunting heat. Little wonder these California natives would respond like this with their resinous leaves that constrain evaporative stress. I've heard that Orchidaceae have taken a hit in many gardens. Again, not surprising. In all of this sorting out, opportunities present themselves in the form of not-so-subtle, sub-vocal finger wagging. I can hear my inner voice(s) now: 1) improve moisture retention; 2) go more xeric and alpine; 3) go shadier and woodland; 4) redo an area with better substrate; 5) foliar feed more consistently during hot spells; and, 6) prepare another list of new plants grown from-what else?- seed.

It is always so important to be growing new plants from seed. I trust that this year's seed exchange will provide the material for many of these changes in your revamped garden(s). Our seed exchange is outstanding and has an outstanding team. One doesn't want to make too many comparisons...but anyone that has attended the seed savers days for the vegetable-centric crowd knows that theirs is but a junior high school science experiment compared to the university level project of our seedex. Am I being proud? Perhaps. But when you consider how many genera over the course of decades has been collected and distributed by the AGCBC, it is truly stunning. YAY us!

I found that many seeds in my garden got fried before I had a chance to collect. Similar reports are drifting in from collectors in western N. America.



Diplacus calycina (yellow) and *D. aurantiaca* (red flws) in my garden

Finally

The picture collage of myself (p 67) was taken by Jennifer Bennet for the magazine Harrowsmith in 1993. Besides revealing a wrinkle-free version of myself, the pre Photo Shop collage shows a rather Okanagan-partial drawing of a *Calochortus macrocarpus* (upper right) and other alpines. I remember a late morning botanizing along the west side of Okanagan lake one March morning. There was a cold fog but the sun was breaking through. I parked the truck and started to scour a benchland area. I could see *Gilia aggregata* on a gravelly roadcut beginning to emerge and some *Fritillaria affinis* just beginning to pop up. However, when I moved down lower in the grasslands and the fog had more or less lifted, there in the bright sunshine with the earth still steaming was a sight that I'll never forget. Stalk after stalk of *Calochortus macrocarpus* that was bent over from the Winter's snows, had little seeds that had germinated and were bursting from the seed pod. Their tiny green stems (epicots) had heaved out of the pod and the -5C/+5C regimen that Norm Deno (Seed Germination and Practice) talks about had worked its magic <http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/41278/PDF> All I had to do was collect them and pop them carefully into some gritty soil mix. That was how I came to have about 20 bulbs for sale 2 years later. Many of these were sold at the Spring Plant sale at VanDusen. Of course, they are notoriously difficult to keep in cultivation. They must be planted deep (8" at least) and on a slope to improve drainage. The bottom of a trough is worthy of an attempt. However, they are best left to their own habitat in poorish loam with grass species as allies. 69

Observations of Some Commercially Available *Narcissus* Part 2

Text and pics by Grahame Ware, © copyright by author

'Atholl Palace' (Brian Duncan 1987- from a Richardson seedling R3509 [Falaise x Debutante]). Double. Mid-season. Standard. Sister to 'Everglades' but cleaner in appearance. This cultivar owes a great deal to the breeding efforts of the legendary J. Lionel Richardson despite Duncan's development and registration of it. But isn't that what breeding is all about? Namely, recognizing what is good in history and making it better. It owes much of its structure and appearance to Falaise. Like most doubles, it is an excellent vase performer with good staying power. A very stylish character with super funky *petaloids* (transformation of reproductive organs into petals). A super double. Atholl Palace seen below with its own house spider.



'White Marvel' (Zandbergen-Terwegen, 1950). Our cover boy is a double sport of the *N. triandrus* selection, 'Tresamble' (pre-1930). DaffSeek calls it a standard, 15" for me. Consider it a chunky dwarf for landscaping purposes. Mid-season. Flowers although not wide nor big, are thick and the petals' acute tips add interest. The frilly corolla is absolutely packed with petaloids. They're scrunched in and very tightly frilled with a lot going on. In addition, there is lots of "forking" or multi-headed



flowers as well in this cv. (See pics on above non-numbered page[71]) Flowering period is sustained in the open garden. Look for some colour breaks in the corolla in the future marketplace. Dynamite little chunkster with very good fragrance. **AM 1976**. Makes a really nice grouping especially if you can find a bed that has elevation so you can approach it from below. Splits up quickly so dig and handle regularly.

'Minnow' (Alec Gray, 1962) Dwarf. Mid-season *tazetta* type. Multi-headed. Superb landscape Narcissus that works so well around the bases of conifers (aureo-variegates especially) and shrubs. Demure and fragrant, it is best used in numbers for the best effect. Good in the rock garden. An indispensable landscaping element. DaffSeek says, "*Resembles 'Canaliculatus' in habit and a dwarf Poetaz in form and color.*" **AGM 1988**. A newly registered offspring (2010) is **Minnowlet**, a split corona type that shows great promise for rock gardener purists.

'Smiling Twin' (Heath 2003) Split corona. Standard but barely 15". DaffSeek has it as mid-late but it is flowering here in late March. Multi-flowering heads. This cv. has a decidedly species feel for a split. Not surprisingly, the pollen parent is *N. jonquilla*. This Brent Heath offering is similar breeding to some of Ruksans splits like Freedom Stars. Flowers somewhat smallish (2") but the delicacy of the corolla and petaloids plus its multi-headed quality, more than compensates. A very nice fragrance.



Endnotes:

The **Wister Award** is a very important one in my opinion as it is based on *field performance over a long period of time* and in different regions. Thus, you know they have to be excellent. It's the equivalent of dog field trials that are performance based as opposed to dog shows where looks and the subjective opinion prevails. http://daffodilusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/ADS-Wister-Awards-2014_v3.pdf

AGM (Award of Garden Merit) This is the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) award based on their field trials.

Daff Seek: This is an amazing data base put together by the American Daffodil Society. Start here: <http://daffseek.org/query/query.php?opt=M1>

Go here to know the **criteria** of the **different classes or divisions** of daffodils. <http://daffodilusa.org/daffodil-info/daffodil-divisions-cultivars/> Note the difference between the two varieties of the split corona daffs- *collar* and *papillon*- coded as 11A and 11B respectively.

Some Show Worthy Classics in a pdf from American Daffodil Society. http://dafftube.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Some_Show_Worthy_Classics_ManAdv.pdf

Suppliers

Van Noort Bulbs is the largest bulb supplier in W. Canada. They grow many of their daffs in the Fraser Valley on their land in Chilliwack. Very reliable people to deal with. Widely available at garden centres, etc. www.vannoortbulb.com

Botanus is more retail than Van Noort and works via mail order. I have ordered some really good daffs from them. Always worth a look but be prepared to spend \$2-\$3/ bulb for some of the really good ones. <http://www.botanus.com/categories/Fall%202015/>

Quality Bulbs. This is Ronald Scamp's business. The hybridist/nursery man from Cornwall is one of the leaders in this field. He has many good smaller daffs that would be an excellent fit for most rock gardens. He does export to Canada but there is a price to pay so to speak. <http://www.qualitydaffodils.co.uk/>

Ringhaddy Daffodils. Nial Watson's fine business, they are at the cutting edge of all things daff. Highly recommended. Great service too! www.ringhaddy-daffodils.com

FLOWER



star-shaped



double triangle



rounded

PERIANTH SEGMENTS



reflected



inflexed



spreading



plane



concave



twisted



ovate



*very broadly
ovate*



oblong



obovate



*shouldered
at base*



spatulate



acute



blunt



mucronate



truncate

CORONA - from the side



cylinder



funnel



cap



bowl



disc

- section



smooth



angled



ribbed

CORONA MOUTH - from the side



straight



flared

- section



even



wavy



frilled



lobed

CORONA RIM - from the side



flanged

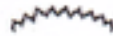


rolled

- section



entire



dentate



crenate

Narcissus morphology terms visually described above courtesy RHS

Cyclamen cultivation on the SW Coast of British Columbia

Text by Wilhelm Bischoff with pictures by Carla Bischoff

(This article appeared in the recent edition (Summer '15) of the Cyclamen Society Newsletter. We are grateful for their kind permission to reproduce it.)



INTRODUCTION

We came to Canada in 1960 and lived in 2 places in Ontario. First in the ancient meteor crater area north of Sudbury. Three years later, after some long and severe Winter's we moved to Hamilton, south west of Toronto, at the eastern end of Lake Ontario and only a few KM north of Lake Erie. Geographically speaking it would be like northern Spain or Italy just south of the Alps. The winters could be very cold and the summers very humid and hot, with severe thunderstorms. There we developed our first garden which included lawns in front of the house and also in the back yard, as it was the custom in the neighborhood. Carla & I were lucky as we shared the same interests in gardening. Our efforts were duly rewarded with several awards by the City of Hamilton. An excellent guide for us was the "Royal Botanical Garden" of the McMaster University. When in 1987 we had the opportunity to move to the West Coast

of British Columbia, we did so without any hesitations. We had visited the Vancouver area several times before and found it climatically more suited to our aspired life style, especially gardening. The climate there also resembled more the climate we grew up with in south western Germany. At the end of May we moved. As a special farewell the weatherman had arrange for 2 severe thunderstorms that day.

Cyclamen in Surrey

Our new home town became Surrey B. C., just south east of Vancouver, in an area called “The Lower Mainland” (in Winter: Lower Rain-Land). A new house was waiting for us with a new front lawn as decoration. The next 3 years we spend getting our garden in front and back of the house laid out and fenced in. No more lawns. At the same time we joined several horticultural clubs. There we met fellow plant lovers. Among them growers of hardy Cyclamen. We knew of Cyclamen from our birth place in Germany but had never seen one grow in a garden environment, because we had lived too far north of the Alps, the home of *Cyclamen purpurascens*. This plant was known to us then as Alpenveilchen (Alpine Violet, a typical misnomer). Still to us it was one of the most revered wild flowers we knew, just after Edelweiss and Enzian. (Leontopodium and Gentiana). During visits to the excellent parks in Vancouver and surrounding municipalities, we were very pleased to be able to see all these plants. Visits to gardens of fellow club members broadened our knowledge and desire to give a loving home to all these plants as well. Luckily we met several people, who had similar interests and a good knowledge of the genus Cyclamen. One of them, Andree Connel, was very generous and gave us some plants to start our new hobby.



At her advice we joined the Cyclamen Society in England, a decision we have never regretted. Their publications and seeds became the foundation of our passion. While this was all in progress, we kept on planting Rhododendron throughout our garden. This provided us with many excellent places to under-plant with different Cyclamen species. The lower branches of the Rhododendron were pruned to give us an understory space to work with for the Cyclamen as well as providing us with good views of these lovely plants. Once established, we had plants that provided winter foliage and flowers throughout the seasons. Now after 27 years, we enjoy Cyclamen throughout our garden, in full sun and in shade, under trees and bushes and in our rock-garden. We provide alkaline top dressing where growing conditions are too acidic because of the many broad leaved conifers we have raised.

Of late we have started to grow calciphile Cyclamen in our TUFA rock area with good results. The ever so vigorous Cyclamen hederifolium gave us the excellent start we needed and introduced us to their Mediterranean growth habitat. No leaves during the hot and dry summers and early Fall blooms with evergreen foliage during our mild winters. This was just the opposite to the growth habits of the plants we knew. The next was *Cyclamen coum*, who rewarded us with an excellent variety of leaf patterns' and scented blooms, starting in mid-January, to last well into March. The third selection, were the many very scented varieties of *Cyclamen purpurascens* and *C. colchicum* that are evergreen Cyclamen species. Now we had plants for just about every condition of our garden, from full sun, to light shade and full shade. These plants provide us with seeds every summer, some to be planted by us and most to be donated to the clubs that we belong as well as the regional parks we visit on a regular basis. We are pleasantly surprised to see every season that these plants have started to multiply and that no one damages the plants or flowers. May I note that several parks had been given Cyclamen plants and seeds by generous donators well before we came into the picture. In time we met most of them and are very pleased to be now part of their efforts. As the local municipalities keep expanding and new parks are established or existing once are enlarged, requests for our plants and seeds never diminishes. Indeed it is a pleasure to be part of this endeavor.

The climatic conditions here on the Pacific coast are very similar to Southern England/Cornwall, or the state of Hessen in Germany, our original home, where the winters are warmer and wet and the summers are cooler and dry. We had some summers without rain for 8 weeks or more, just like the Mediterranean coasts and islands, the home of so many Cyclamen species. As compared with the rest of the Pacific coast, we have the advantage of having the mountainous Vancouver Island just west of us which shields us from the sometimes severe Pacific storms. By using well-drained soil and arranging our garden in raised beds, we avoid water saturation. The dry summer conditions can be overcome with hand watering where needed. Luckily we have excellent drinking water here on the coast. The pH is almost 7. We can safely grow 18 Cyclamen species outdoors throughout the seasons with excellent results. Cyclamen species listed in the Society's newly published, excellent eight page handbook, "A Gardener's Guide", are hardy as outdoors plants in our area. Several of the species listed as "Tender Species", can also be considered as outdoor plants. Our Cyclamen species are inter-planted to suite their growth habits and size requirements.

This results in a very picturesque setting throughout the seasons. Seed collecting becomes a bit of a problem, as some seeds cannot be properly identified without leaves. Seeds which we are not sure of will be sown by us and the plants to be identified later after leaves have appeared. All these years we have bought seeds from abroad, especially from the Cyclamen Society and vendors, as they are listed in the Society's biannual Journal.

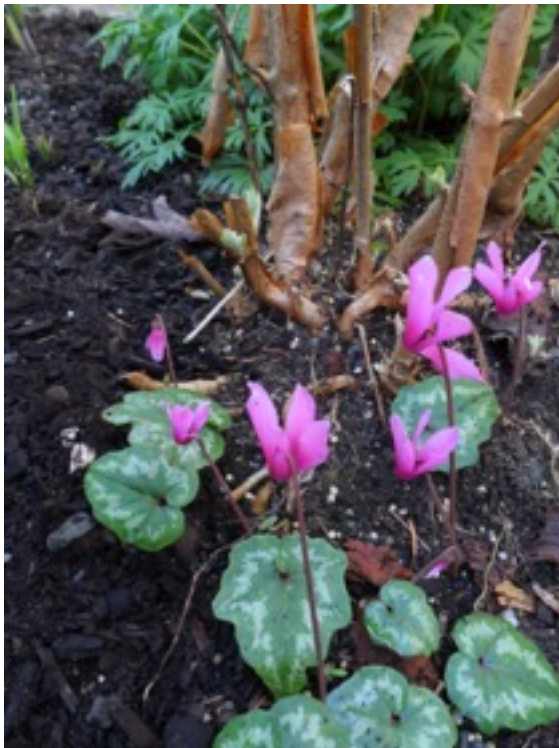
CONCLUSION



We will keep-on enjoying these beautiful miniature "Shooting-Star Flowers" from the lands about and within the Mediterranean. We will do whatever we can to get more people interested in their culture. For people that are interested in Cyclamen, this can open many additional interests, modern and ancient Languages, Geography, Geology, History and ancient Religions. The very word "Cyclamen", something round, related to our bi-cycle; 2 round things, the wheels, referring to the corms. *C. cilicium*, where it came from, the ancient "Cilician Gates", mountain passes in south eastern Turkey. *C. colchicum*, the land of the "Golden-Fleece", east of the Black Sea, where the ancient Greeks believed that sheep existed with golden fur. It is interesting to know that until recently in some remote valleys of the Caucasus, local residents

pegged sheep skins onto the riverbeds in order to collect gold-dust. Clubs and other institutions kindly recognized our efforts with gardening, and especially with Cyclamen. A West Coast monthly publication, "Gardens West" published our garden some years ago, where our water feature rated the front page and diverse plants were featured on 4 inside pages. The local "Vancouver Sun" newspaper featured and mentioned our garden several times in their horticultural section and once in their Calendar, thanks to Steve Whysall, the editor of this section. The bi-monthly journal of the "American Rhododendron Society" allowed us several pages for pictures and texts on how to associate Cyclamen with Rhododendron. We are listed in the "Speakers-List" of the "British Columbia Society of Garden Clubs" with several themes, one of them "Hardy Cyclamen for the west coast of British Columbia". All this resulted in that we are frequently invited to give presentations to clubs within a radius of about 100 km and across the USA boarder, as far south as Seattle, Washington, as well to clubs on Vancouver Island, just west of us. Finally, the City of Surrey honored us with a couple of awards in the past, where front and back yards had been judged.

An important addendum: *Cyclamen repandum*, a very interesting plant, as it is one of the shortest appearing Cyclamen. It showy leaves and flowers appear in early April. The plant sets seeds and goes to rest by the end of May. The leaves have interesting patterns and stand well over surrounding plants. The very scented flowers as well are produced over surrounding plants. *Cyclamen repandum* needs shade. Use a marker so as not to disturb its dormant tuber. Plant this species some 4 to 6 inches deep. See pic below of *Cyclamen repandum*



Pink Mountain Seed Supplement Info

by Ron Long
rlphoto@shaw.ca

Pink Mountain is located 150 km north of Fort St John in north eastern BC. The mountain is only 1700 m high but due its northerly latitude, the summit plateau has uniformly alpine tundra. The plants that grow there are all alpine species with fascinating adaptations that allow them to survive one of the harshest environments on earth.

A wind farm and fracking wells threaten the summit. In cooperation with the UBC Botanical Garden, I have been carrying out research (with support from the Alpine Garden Club of BC) to determine the extent of the biodiversity on Pink Mountain with a floral survey.

Our research over the last three years has revealed a diversity of plants that is not equaled anywhere else in BC. For this reason, we are recommending to the Province of BC that an Ecological Reserve be established to protect a significant portion of the Pink Mountain Summit.

This seed collection from Pink Mountain will be important for the restoration work required after industrial development takes place. We are asking AGCBC members to keep us informed of their success or failures in growing Pink Mountain plants and write about their experiences in the Bulletin.

We also hope that growers will harvest seed whenever possible so that it is available for future distribution ex garden.

Ed:>>> Look for this seed in this year's seed exchange at the end of the N. American natives wild-collected section.

It would be a very good idea to prefix your seed tags with PM and the species i.e. PM-15 AGCBC *Genera species* along with the usual method info such as when you planted it out, etc., etc. It would also be very useful to familiarize yourself with the habitat of Pink Mtn.

See link here: <http://www.pinkmountain.ca/rare-species/tundra-habitat>

Thanks Ron!