Alpine Garden Club of British Columbia

The promise of things to come -
Phyteuma comosum* v. *pubescens* syn *Physoplexis comosa
- in mega bud, sheltered at the base of its mini tufa
mountain in the editor's rock garden

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AGCBC meetings are 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 pm and the meetings start at 7:30 pm.

Please bring plants for the plant draw; the proceeds of which go toward paying for the hall rental. Don't forget to bring your coffee/tea mug.

2017 AGC-BC Upcoming Events

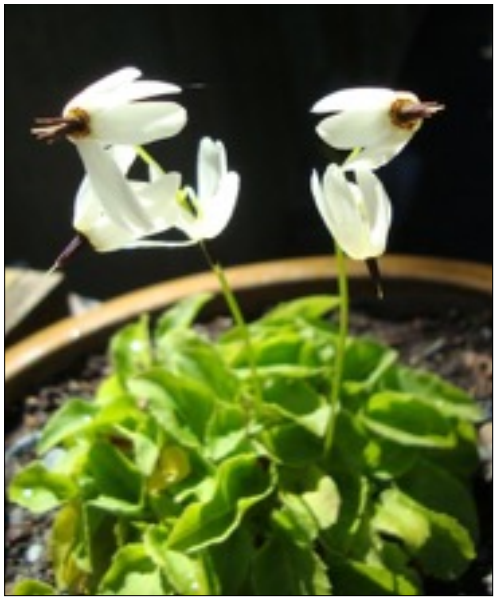
- **June 14, AGC-BC Meeting** - Jiří Papoušek on Diversity of Methods of Growing Alpines in the Czech Garden
- **September 13, AGC-BC Meeting** - Ken Marr on Flora of Northern BC Alpine
- **September 16, 12pm - 4pm** -AGC-BC Fall Sale
- **October 11, AGC-BC Meeting** - Tony Reznicek on Rock Garden and Woodland Plants under the Lights of Modern Evolutionary Biology
- **November 8, AGC-BC Meeting** - Ron Long on Tundra, and AGM

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

Pretty in pink
Geranium cinereum 'Ballerina' in the Editor's garden

From the Editor

Dear Readers:
I am sure that, for you, like me, here on the Wet (or in this case Cold!) Coast, winter suddenly ceased and Spring has gone by in a flash. It feels like my rock garden went from 0 to 60 in a month. More of that in the next issue in an update on the fate of my Carnivorous Plants and Hardy Orchids.Meanwhile here are a few treats that I discovered when weeding yesterday - L to R: *Campanula chamissonis, Iris innominata, Primula latiloba:*



In this issue, my sincere thanks, first off, to Ger van den Beuken who shares another lovely Plant Portrait, and to Dr. Luis Gonzalez Torres who gives us an overview on the Orchids of Cuba (a follow-up to his lecture at the AGC-BC meeting back in January). Also to John Mitchell, who reports on the rebuild of the Traditional Alpine House at the RBG Edinburgh, completing the upgrades and renovations of the public parts of their Alpine installations.

Thank you too, to David Sellars, Bob Tuckey and Linda Verbeek who report and record the AGC-BC Spring Show and Sale. And appreciation to Zdeněk Zvolánek, who gives us a taster of the rock garden design prowess of Jiří Papoušek, our June speaker. And, as always, thank you David for another useful 'Gardens Rock'.

Responding to my plea to members for submissions, Ken Gillanders from Tasmania clues us in on the *Cyclamen* that grow for him Down Under. And Carla and Bill Bischoff share some lovely photos of early spring in their garden.

Please do send along your experiences and photos for the 'Bulletin'.

Valerie Melanson,
melanson.valerie@gmail.com

Plant Portrait - *Campanula peshmenii*

Ger van den Beuken, The Netherlands

Campanula peshmenii is an awesome introduction, arising a few years ago from a collection in Turkey made by some Czech seed collectors. It's a very rare species with leafy stems 10-15 cm long and scabrous leaves. It was found on Boz Dag near Izmir in the southwest of Turkey, growing on limestone rocks. The flowers, bell-shaped in a very nice, soft blue colour, appear in the axels of the leaves.

I have had it in my collection since 2015, propagated from seeds and then cultivated as a plant in a deep pot in the alpine house. The young plants flowered in the first year in spring and a second time the same year during summer. The same happened this year which means that we have a very welcome, new *Campanula* species in cultivation.

The substrate I use is a well-drained mix of coarse sand, pumice, seramis and a small part of fine peat. To raise the pH, I add a small part of lime powder. Winter hardiness is no problem but the plants seem to suffer in wetness, hence the alpine house. As soon as possible I will try outside on tufa to check its suitability as a rock garden plant.

(This Plant Portrait was originally published in "The Crevice" #42, Late Summer 2016, and is here reprinted with permission of the author.)

Cuban Orchids

Dr. Luis Gonzalez Torres

Cuban orchid flora comprises about 93 genera and 315 species. Some of these genera are endemic to the Greater Antilles, like *Dilomilis*, *Fuertesiella*, *Broughtonia* and the Cuban genus *Atopoglossum*. Meanwhile, species endemism represents 32% of the flora of the Greater Antilles. Also noteworthy is the occurrence of 27 endemic species of *Lepanthes*, the most species rich genus in the region, and 20 from the 23 species of *Encyclia* reported in the area.

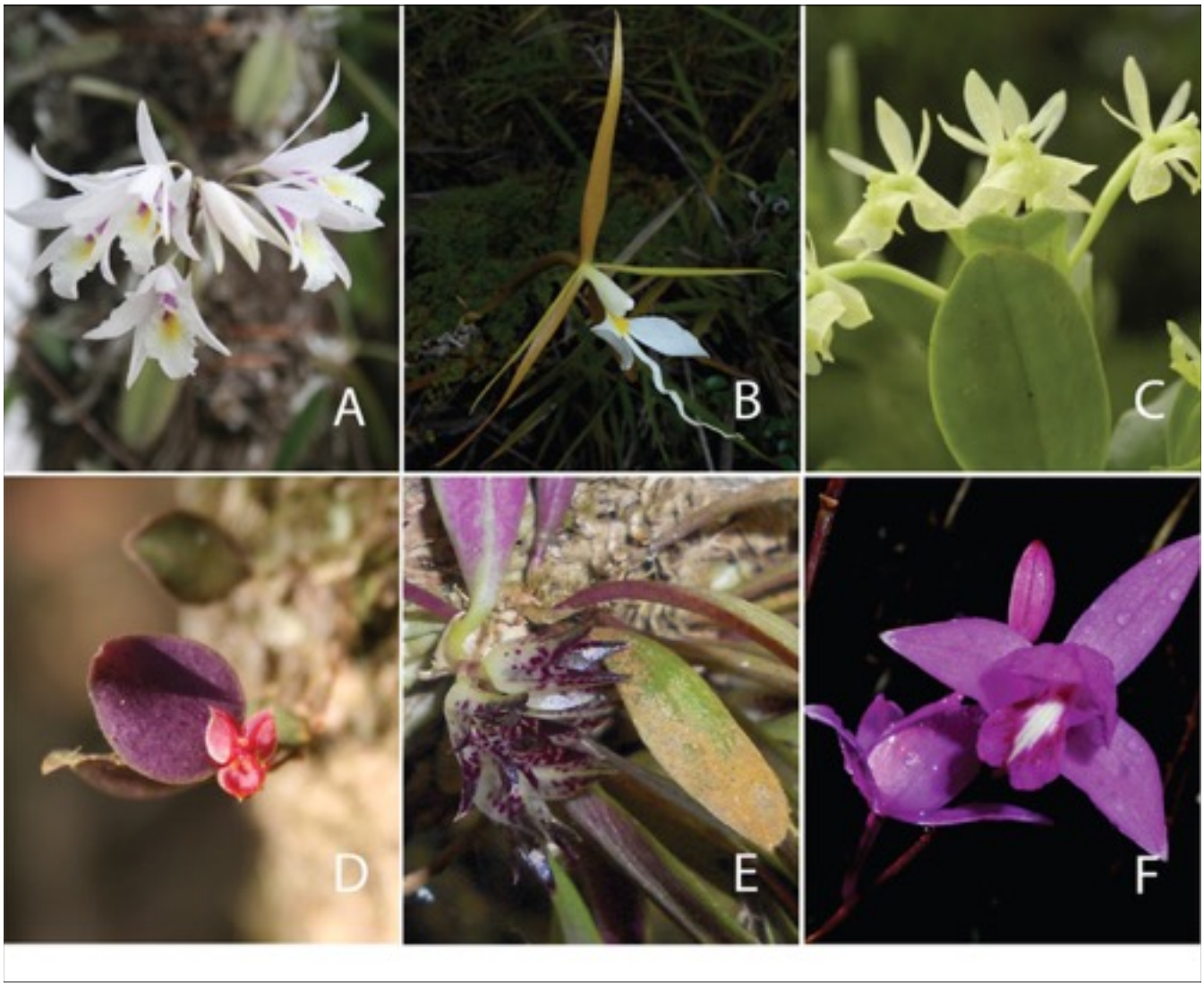
In Cuba, orchids appear in almost all vegetative formations, and while some require almost complete shade, others thrive in full sun. They may be found at all altitudes, from sea level to the highest elevation of the country. According to their geographic distribution, Cuban orchids grow in five main areas of the country:

- Orchids from plains and low hillocks (growing from the sea level to 200 m a.s.l.). This area is characterized by an average annual temperature of between 24-26˚C (75.2-78.8˚F). Rain oscillates between 1000 mm and 1400 mm annually. Most of the Cuban *Encyclias* grow in this area, as well as *Broughtonia cubensis* (photo by Alfredo Garcia) considered one of the most endangered plant species of Cuba. Another endemic species, *Encyclia phoenicea*, shows a remarkable variety in floral shape and colour and is commonly known as the chocolate orchid given the fragrance of its flowers.

- Orchids from the mountains of western Cuba (growing from 200 to 692 m a.s.l.). The annual average temperature in this area is between 22˚C and 24˚C (71.6˚F and 75.2˚F). Rain oscillates between 1800 mm and 2000 mm. Several species of *Epidendrum* and *Tetramicra* are common. Here, *Epidendrum nocturnum,* known as Lady of the Night (photo by José L. Gómez.), has a flowering peak from October to June and is found in the entire country from lowlands to high mountains. Also from this area is *Domingoa hematochila*, flowering all year, but mainly from April to May.

- Orchids from the mountains of central Cuba (Guamuhaya) (growing from 200 to 1140 m a.s.l.). The annual average temperature of this area oscillates between 16˚C and 22˚C (60.8˚F and 71.6˚F). It is regularly covered with fog during most of the day and rain varies between 1800 mm and 2000 mm annually. The greatest richness and diversity of orchids is found in the rainforest. Several species of

Lepanthes, *Specklinia* and *Vanilla* are common. Other examples are *Epidendrum caribiorum* and *Comparettia falcata*.



Photos above: A)Broughtonia cubensis, photo by Alfredo García. B) Epidendrum nocturnum, photo by José L. Gómez. C) Epidendrum caribiorum, photo by José L. Gómez. D) Lepanthes trichodactyla, photo by Eldis Bécquer. E) Atoploglossum postratum, photo by José L. Gómez. F) Bletia antillana, photo by José L. Gómez.

- Orchids from the mountains of southeastern Cuba (Sierra Maestra) (growing from 200 to 1974 m a.s.l.). The average annual temperature is between 20°C (68°F) and 22°C (71.6°F). Precipitation ranges from 2000 mm to 2400 mm annually. This area has a high level of endemism for orchids and many other groups of plants, with the cloud forests having the greatest diversity of orchids. Moreover, it has the higher number of species of *Lepanthes* in the country. *Fuertesiella pterichoides* –an endemic from the Greater Antilles, can be also found in these mountains blooming from May to July.

- Orchids from the mountains of northeastern Cuba (Nipe-Sagua-Baracoa Massif) (growing from 200 to 1231 m a.s.l.). The annual average of temperature is between 20°C (68°F) and 22°C (71.6°F) in most of the region, but at the highest altitudes, ranges from 15.1°C (59.18°F) to 17.8°C (64.04°F). The average annual rainfall varies greatly: in Sierra de Nipe and Sierra Cristal, it is between 2000 mm and 2400 mm, while in the Moa-Baracoa Crests, it is between 2800 mm and 3500 mm. This area comprises the highest elevation of the Island with the greatest diversity of orchids found in the rainforest. The Cuban genus *Atopoglossum* (three species) is endemic of these mountains. There are also four species of the Antillean genus *Dilomilis* and several species of *Bletia*, *Lepanthes* and *Tolumnia*.

Photos above: (A) and B) Trails in Topes de Collantes, Central Cuba. C) Rainforest display at the National BotanicGarden, Cuba. D) Old Havana guided tour. (Photos by Alejandro Palmarola.)

Orchids are very sensitive to habitat alterations and extraction of wild plants for trade. There are several endangered species of Cuban orchids, three of them threatened with extinction (*Broughtonia cubensis, Tetramicra malpighiarum* and *Encyclia grisebachiana*). Planta! (see more at **www.planta.ngo**) is supporting their conservation

by increasing awareness through conservation festivals and publications, promoting their propagation for ex situ cultivation and raising funds to support future reinforcements of wild populations.

One of these fundraising initiatives is the Cuban Orchid field trip (see more at **www.planta.ngo**). In this trip, participants will be visiting trails in protected areas and collections in botanic gardens. We will also have guided tours to some of the first Spanish settlements in Cuba. Proceeds from this trip will support plant conservation inCanada and abroad.

All proceeds from the Cuban Orchids talk hosted by the Alpine Garden Club of BC in January 11, 2017 will be matched by Planta! and donated to support Cuban orchids conservation.

About Planta!

Planta!'s mission is to preserve endangered plant life and their habitats by educating the public, creating capacities and supporting conservationists pursuing innovative initiatives for people and biodiversity to thrive.

Planta! considers local community-based projects the foundations of effective conservation. We work on developing conservation knowledge, skills, concern, and commitment in the individuals who will be able to identify, work on and resolve local community issues, and from there address regional conservation challenges by networking and collaborating region-wide. Ninety-five percent of their funds are used for conservation.

Dr. Luis Roberto Gonzalez Torres has anM.Sc. in Botany and Ph.D. in Biology. Previously he taught in the Faculty of Biology and lectured on plant ecology and conservation to postgrads at the National Botanic Garden, both at the University of Havana. He has won many grants and awards - most recently the prestigious 2014 Whitley Award for his work promoting the conservation of Cuban plant life. He is Chair of the Cuban Plant Specialist Group of the ICUN and is currently lecturer in the Department of Botany at the University of British Columbia.

The Rebuild of the Traditional Alpine House at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh

John Mitchell
Garden Supervisor, Alpine Section, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

In the early 1970s Alf Evans and Ron Macbeth got the opportunity and the money to build what has become an iconic part of RBGE - the traditional alpine house. Now, after 42 years, the building was starting to get to the point where we had to make a decision to make small fixes or go for a whole new build. After the huge success of the tufa house, which I said I would never do again, the thought of refurbishing the traditional alpine house filled me with a warm glow. Having spent all my working life looking at this building, we had to commit and bring it back to its former glory. After a fundraising campaign we had enough money to start to rebuild the alpine house. Even before we could start with the work there was a huge amount of pre-start works to be done. Firstly rehouse all the plants from the front area. Then we had to remove all the sand (which we reused once all was built). Next we had to move all the troughs that were standing on the slabs which took a fair bit of time and lots of sore backs.

To avoid building regulations we knocked the whole house and frames down to the last brick, and, like a phoenix rising from the fire, the frames and alpine house started to look like how it was 40 years ago.

With the frames we made slight alterations - we used breeze blocks on the inside to strengthen the walls as we have a large amount of sand and this would make the frames last longer. I forgot to mention when we knocked the building down we reused all the old ironmongery - this was painstakingly cleaned and painted by RBGE staff and reused on the new build. As with all new projects we try and upgrade and improve on certain areas that we thought were old fashioned and dated.

The whole glass was replaced with 5 mm toughened glass which is a health and safety requirement. And instead of using small panes we have gone for full length panes which makes it far lighter. The biggest change we have made is we have

improved the security mesh. I must say that it is a shame we have to do this, but the collection of plants is so valuable that we daren't change protecting this historic collection. We have ungraded to a stainless steel frame, then stainless wire mesh and it looks very nice. In keeping with the original design, we have used western cedar which will hopefully last a lifetime. Here you can see from the images each stage of the build:

Thinking of some of the plants in the outside frame - *Epigaea gaultherioides*, one of the original plants, was moved out and I am pleased to say that it has settled back into its new home. It was still a bit touch and go if we had enough funds to redo the slabbing but after a few sleepless nights we reached our target and we set about slabbing the whole area. Once we had lifted the

slabs we ungraded the drainage and instead of bedding the slabs on sand we used gravel and the main base was type 3 hard-core which does not have fine particles mixed in. All this was to help with the drainage. The whole area was dug out, edging was cemented round the edge, then the slabs were laid in a random pattern. This has taken longer than expected - it has run over by about five weeks but I am delighted to say that we have opened up for Easter.

We were also gifted 13 stone troughs from the Milne family which have now been integrated into the main trough area and this has enhanced the whole area.

We used this new pointing mix which goes down wet which makes life so much easier but it still took three days to point the whole area.

I have to thank everyone who helped to make this whole project a success and to the staff of the alpine area for putting up with me over the whole build but as you can see the whole area is stunning and I hope that the late Alf Evans and Ron Macbeth are pleased with the end result and now we have two alpine houses showing the different ways in which you can grow these beautiful plants.

AGC-BC 2017 Spring Show

Photos by David Sellars

Pleione, Narcissius, Saxifraga, Rhododendron

L: Douglasia montana, R: Fritillarias

L: Saxifraga dinnikii, R: Primula hybrids

L: The Show from the Main Table, R: Best in Show

AGC-BC 2017 Show Results

Bob Tuckey

Class 2	**Any rock garden plant**	
3rd	*Cryptomeria japonica*	Bob Tuckey
Class 4	**Any woodland plant**	
1st	*Anemonella*	M. Brehaut
Class 8	**Any native Pacific Northwest plant suitable for rock garden**	
1st	*Fritillaria affinis*	David Sellars
2nd	*Sedum spathulifolium*	Ruth Anderson
Class 9	**Any native Pacific Northwest plant suitable for woodland or bog**	
2nd	*Selaginella*	Jason Nehring
Class 10	**Any plant suitable for woodland bog garden except native to Pacific Northwest**	
1st	*Asarum asaroides*	Jason Nehring
2nd	*Asarum* sp.	Jason Nehring
2nd	*Heloniopsis acutifolia*	Linda Veerbeek
2nd	*Corydalis cheilanthifolia*	Linda Veerbeek
3rd	*Corydalis solida transsylvanica*	Linda Veerbeek
Class 11	**Rock garden plant native to Europe**	
1st	*Anemone nemorosa* 'Virescens'	Bob Tuckey
Class 12	**Rock garden plant native to Asia**	
1st	*Saxifraga dinnikii*	David Sellars
2nd	*Hepatica japonica* 'Orihime'	M. Brehaut
3rd	*Hepatica japonica* 'Ran shiro'	M. Brehaut

Class 14	**Rock garden plant native to Africa**	
1st	*Ranunculus calandrinioides*	Ann Jolliffe
2nd	*Gladiolus tristis*	Ann Jolliffe
Class 15	**Rock garden plant native to North America**	
1st	*Douglasia montana*	David Sellars
2nd	*Claytonia megarhiza*	David Sellars
Class 16	**Rock garden plant native to South America**	
1st	*Tropaeolum benthic*	Ann Jolliffe
2nd	*Ipheion* 'Rolf Fiedler'	David Sellars
Class 17	**Rock garden plant raised from seed by exhibitor**	
1st	*Callianthemum anemonoides*	Linda Veerbeek
1st	*Gymnospermium altaicum*	Ann Jolliffe
2nd	*Fritillaria eduardii*	Linda Veerbeek
3rd	*Fritillaria bucharica*	Ann Jolliffe
3rd	*Saxifraga* 'Phoenix'	David Sellars
Class 21	***Saxifraga***	
1st	*Saxifraga* 'Polonaise'	David Sellars
2nd	*Saxifraga* 'Allendale Bravo'	David Sellars
3rd	*Saxifraga* 'Allendale Bamby'	David Sellars
Class 23	***Lewisia***	
2nd	*Lewisia tweedyi*	David Sellars
2nd	*Lewisia tweedyi*	David Sellars
Class 25	**Any dwarf shrub suitable for the rock garden not eligible for class 26**	
2nd	*Polygala chamaebuxus*	Mark Demers
Class 26	**Rhodo species or hybrid not eligible for class 25**	
1st	*R. forrestii* var. *repens*	Jason Nehring
2nd	*R. dendrocharis*	Mark Demers
2nd	*R. megeratum*	David Sellars
Class 26	**Fern**	
1st	*Asplenium trichomanes*	Bob Tuckey
Class 32	**Pseudobulbous plant**	
1st	*Pleione*	Mark Demers
Class 33	***Narcissus* suitable for the rock garden**	
1st	*Narcissus rupicola*	David Sellars
2nd	*Narcissus assoanus*	David Sellars
3rd	*Narcissus bulbocodium*	Bruce McConnell

Class ?	***Fritillaria***	
1st	*Korokowia serventszowii*	Jason Nehring
2nd	*Scilla rosenii*	Mark Demers
3rd	*Fritillaria thessala*	David Sellars
Class 40	***Primula* – any hybrid**	
1st	*Primula allionii* 'Broadwell Milkmaid'	David Sellars
2nd	*Primula* 'Pink Aire'	David Sellars
3rd	*Primula* 'Mist Aire'	David Sellars
Class 40	**Bonsai**	
1st	*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*	Peter Brolese
2nd	*Styrax japonica*	Karen Thirkell
3rd	Larch	Bob Tuckey
Class 43	**Rarity**	
2nd	*Claytonia megarhiza nivalis*	David Sellars

Trophies

Best in Show and Best Grown from Seed		
	Gymnospermium altaicum	Ann Jolliffe
Best Alpine	*Saxifraga dinnikii*	David Sellars
Best Shrub and Best *Rhododendron*		
	R. forrestii var.*repens*	Jason Nehring
Best Fern	*Asplenium trichomanes*	Bob Tuckey
Best Bulb	*Pleione*	Mark Demers
Best Cushion	*Saxifraga* 'Polonaise'	David Sellars
Best Bonsai	*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*	Peter Brolese
Best *Primula*	*Primula allionii* 'Broadwell Milkmaid'	David Sellars
Best Woodlander	*Asarum asaroides*	Jason Nehring
Best Pacific Northwest Plant		
	Fritillaria affinis	David Sellars
Best Species	*Douglasia montana*	David Sellars

AGC-BC Spring Sale 2017

Linda Verbeek
(Photo from David Sellars)

When I walked into the VanDusen Floral Hall on Saturday morning, I was flabbergasted. In the garden, spring was barely beginning – there were snowdrops, OK, and all sorts of noses, and maybe a few firstlings of other spring flowers, but it was still a pretty bleak scene. I should perhaps add that we live in rather a cold pocket. Nevertheless, the Hall looked surprisingly lush with greenery and flowers. I don't know how everyone did it, but it surely helped to make the sale more of a success than we might have hoped.

I, myself, had been so discouraged that I gave up having my own table, and that's why you get this story. I had some time to make notes. I think there may have been fewer growers than usual, but they made up for it by the variety. Interestingly, some people had extensive collections of particular genera. For instance, Gary Lewis of Phoenix Perennials had really gone for Arisaemas this year (are they in fashion, or does he just love them?). He had at least *A. griffithii, A. nepenthoides, A. concinnum, A. galeatum, A. speciosum,* and I may have missed a few. They were all available as tubers – Arisaemas wake up very late in the season. I've always thought of Arisaemas as largely tropical – apart from a few like our American native Jack-in-the pulpit (*A. triphyllum*),

but more of them are hardy than you might think. *A. ringens* (which was for sale on the Club table) has flourished in the garden for years and years, and *A. griffithii* survived this past winter in a pot(!) with only marginal cover. This plant comes up nearly completely black, although the leaves turn green as they expand. The spathe is also nearly black with paler stripes. *A. speciosum* didn't survive the same treatment, but it was rather draconian – and unintended, but by the time it got so very cold, I couldn't really get at my pots any more. I don't know the other three, but according to information on the web, they are also hardy, at least they will tolerate our regular winter temperatures. They may not like the soggy soil so much, and a little shelter over them might improve their survival. Most Arisaemas grow three or four feet tall with large leaves. It seems to me that they either have three enormous leaflets (like *A. ringens* and *A. griffithii*), or else an umbrella of narrow leaflets.

Gary had a lot of other plants as well. A number of *Calanthe* hybrids – *Calanthe* is a widespread genus of terrestrial orchids. And some come from Japan, so they might be a bit hardier, but I have never had much luck with them. *Pteridophyllum racemosum* is a plant I've mentioned before – it belongs in the Poppy family, which is about as outlandish as you can think. In leaf the plant looks like a small version of a deer fern, with narrow, dark green pinnately divided leaves. The inflorescence is an airy panicle of small white flowers, which look somewhat like halfway between a poppy and a *Corydalis* – if your imagination stretches that far. It is very pretty, comes from woodland in Japan, and consistently refuses to live with me. *Corydalis quantmeyeriana* is unusually large and robust for its genus, looking a bit like a bleeding heart. Some cultivars have chocolate coloured leaves. The flowers are pink or white.

Another extensive collection was the wealth of Hostas that Peter Klapwijk had brought – in this case they were all cultivars, but the true species (and there are a number) are seldom seen. A few names: *H.* ' Sleeping Beauty', a medium variety with blue-green leaves with creamy margins, *H.* 'Platinum Tiara', another medium one, with much rounder leaves, making a very crowded rosette. The leaves are very pale, chartreuse green with the narrowest of white margins. *H.* 'Monashee Blue' or maybe 'Monashee Blue Cup' is a Canadian introduction, with quite round leaves that in a mature plant will curl up a bit to form bowls (rather than cups, I would say). There were many more, but I've made my point.

Peter had brought his wife, who makes a specialty of making and planting troughs. Mostly they were not very large, and they were pretty well all planted with succulents, sedums and sempervivums.

Scattered over the various tables there were also a considerable number of *Paeonia* species. I've listed the following: *P. emodi* is a tall herbaceous peony from the Himalaya region. The deeply cut leaves have pointed leaflets, quite unlike many peonies, and the large flower is pure white. It is hardy only to zone 8. *P. caucasica* (correctly *P. daurica* ssp. *coriifolia*) has quite rounded leaves and purple flowers. It grows to about 60 cm. *P. veitchii* comes from China and has even more finely divided leaves than *P. emodi.* The magenta flowers are slightly nodding and have a somewhat frayed look around the edges. I've had this plant in the garden, but the crown ended up partly exposed (either because it pushed itself up, or because the soil eroded around it) and that was too much for it. There seems to be some confusion about *P. handelmazetti*: some people consider it a synonym of *P. delavayi,* others think it's a hybrid between that one and *P. lutea.* In either case, it is a tree peony, and it has the most unusual, coppery-red flower colour. *P. peregrina* is an herbaceous plant from southeastern Europe, also with pointed leaflets, although not as many as *P. emodi* and *P. veitchii,* and the flowers are a true red. If you'd bought all of these, you'd have quite an interesting display!

Having got into collections, I'll next mention the Rhododendrons. We always have two major sellers of Rhodies: Sue Klapwijk, who has mostly, but not exclusively cultivars, and Fearing's Farm, who concentrates on species. Again, there were way too many to list them all, and of course, many of them weren't blooming yet, so the following are just a few that caught my eye. Sue had *R. augustinii,* which is not unknown around the Lower Mainland, sometimes called the blue rhododendron. It is a fairly open shrub, and the flowers are more purple or lavender than blue, usually, but the colour is quite variable. Also *R.* 'April White', which is a hybrid with lot of *R. dauricum* in it. It is partly double, which makes the inflorescence more substantial. It should be quite a show in full bloom. Another one was *R.* 'Jean's Favourite', which is a local hybrid created by the late Bob Rhodes of Maple Ridge.

Lambert Vrijmoed of Free Spirit Nursery, had striking *Hepatica acutiloba alba.* I've actually got this one in the garden, having smuggled a piece into the country from the Pyrenees (don't tell anyone!).

Personally I am always intrigued by *Rhododendron* species, but I couldn't begin to list all of them. I picked *R. polytrichum,* which must be a very unusual one, because I couldn't find any cultural information on it. It comes from China, and has funnel-shaped, fairly pale rose flowers, with deeper colour in the bud. *R. lutescens* grows about equally large, but as the name suggests, it has yellow flowers, which is fairly unusual in Rhododendrons. While we are on shrubs, I'll mention that the Club had bought quite a range of dwarf conifers to sell on – we seldom get backyard growers propagating those, so this was quite a rare opportunity. But I don't care for them, and so won't say any more.

You can always trust Jason Nehring to come up with unusual plants. This year it was *Chloranthus japonicus,* in its own family, looks a bit like a cross between Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*) and False Lily-of-the-Valley (*Maianthemum dilatatum*). Like both of those, it likes shade. It has heavily corrugated leaves and a spike of small, spidery flowers. It stays green through the summer. *Soldanella minima* isn't such an unknown, although this one is unusual in having pale lilac or white flowers, not the typical rich purple. *Iris gracilipes* is like a taller, slimmer form of *I. cristata,* but unlike that one (which is North American) it comes from Japan. It actually looks more elegant.

Mark Stephens charmed me with pots of *Iris versicolor.* Again, this is a personal thing – we saw it in the wild two years ago in Nova Scotia, although it wasn't in bloom then. It is an eastern species, and not particularly unusual, the flowers are actually not unlike those of *I. latifolia* from the Pyrenees, but it belongs in a different section, because *I. versicolor* has creeping rhizomes – and apparently can make extensive clumps – whereas *I. latifolia* has bulbs.

Ann Jolliffe, like me, has a thing about Fritillarias. She had *F. carica*, a small yellow-flowered one from southern Turkey, which is not likely to grow in the garden, given our soggy winters. Also *F. pallidiflora* which will grow in the open garden, if given the right conditions. It comes from central-eastern Asia, and so presumably doesn't like too much wet in the summer, but if grown under deciduous shrubs in well drained soil, it'll cope. The shrubs help to suck up surplus water. It is a sturdy one, with broad leaves along the stem and a cluster of large, fat, pale yellow bells. *Cardamine pentaphyllos* is a woodland plant from central Europe, which grows very happily at least in Ann's garden. It grows about 20 cm tall, with fresh green divided leaves, and makes trusses of large (to 2 cm) lavender flowers. Perfect for the deciduous shade garden! Very unusual indeed was the plant of *Salix arctica*. Although Willows grow very readily from cuttings, you have to have a plant to take cuttings from, and they are very difficult from seed as the seed is only viable for a week or so. I don't know whether I have ever seen the plant before. The plant she had was not as flat a shrublet as I had expected, but apparently it is quite variable – and ours are hardly in its native conditions. And any dwarf willow is worth having, but I got there too late.

Like Ann and I with bulbs, David Sellars has a 'thing' about Saxifrages. He grows them beautifully in his large tufa hill, and the more special ones in an open alpine house. Apparently they grow well enough that he can sell some of them, all hybrids, of which I noted *Saxifraga* 'Marianna', a nice large-flowered yellow one, and *Saxifraga* 'Mary Golds', which in spite of the name is a clear white one. The buds are purplish and a little of the colour remains in the open flower as the slightest blush. They are both Kabschia hybrids – for the saxologists among us. He was also the one who sold *Paeonia veitchii,* which I described before.

Dan Szierzega is another one who never brings the regular stuff. This year he had a whole collection of *Dysosma* hybrids, mostly with *D. pleianthus* as one parent. They used to be called *Podophyllum*. Although *D. pleianthum* has shiny plain green leaves, the hybrids can have all sorts of interesting patterning on the leaves. I was sorely tempted by *Eucrosia bicolor,* a relative of the *Hippeastrum* that you see everywhere around Christmas. The flowers are smaller, though, and the stamens are very long, so the effect is different. And the leaves are more of a rosette. It comes from lower regions of Ecuador and Peru, so would need to be inside in winter – and moreover, Amaryllidaceae are very susceptible to *Narcissus* Bulb Fly, so I didn't try.

The Club table had quite an extensive selection, but I haven't got all of it, because plants kept coming in well after the sale had started, and I had my mind on other things by then. We don't get plants of *Kirengeshoma* very often, and I don't think I've ever seen it for sale in a nursery (I haven't been to Phoenix Perennials, they probably do have it). It belongs in the *Hydrangea* family, and has the large leaves that go with it. In my garden it goes completely dormant in winter, and in mid-spring puts out a bunch of mostly unbranched stems carrying maple-like leaves. The plant will grow to maybe a metre tall, and late in the summer start producing a sequence of good-sized, fleshy looking, tubular bells. It keeps this up for a month and a half, which is pretty good for a plant that can stand a lot of shade. *Corydalis cheilanthifolia,* in contrast, is a spring flower. It makes a flat rosette of very finely divided, ferny leaves, which are quite pretty in themselves, and in spring produces solid spikes of large butter yellow, typical Corydalis flowers. Although in China it grows in woodland, here it seems to prefer at least some morning sunshine. It isn't long lived for me, but self-seeds – maybe almost too generously, but they can be pulled out very easily. And one of the Peonies, *P. peregrina*, also came from the Club table.

At the end of the afternoon, it was very gratifying to see how denuded the Hall looked. The Club table was nearly empty, but of course we flog the left-overs in the last hour. I hope the growers also went home content.

Tunneling into First Class Rock Gardening

Zdeněk Zvolánek, Czech Republic
(Photos by Zdeněk Zvolánek and Jiří Papoušek)

(Previously published in "The Crevice" Issue # 45, Part 3, Early Spring 2017)

During a cool February at my home, I write this because I want to introduce you to my rock gardening friend, Jiří Papoušek (the Alpine Parrot). Jiří is soaring to become the leading Czech rock gardener of the next 25 years (while I am making my slow departure from the blooming stage). This relatively young man has very good qualifications: Prague University, a very nice knowledge of English, a good position in an international parcel service, a fine-tuned sense for putting stones together in a noble and practical way, green fingers for propagating alpines and contacts with the best growers abroad (including Scottish wizard, Cyril Lafong). Above all, at home in the Czech Republic, he has had a tender start as an intelligent disciple of yours truly.

Jiří Papoušek has a perfect advantage: he does not drink poisonous alcoholic drinks like we gardeners love to do, thus losing our good sense, time and money. He is very busy building his own garden in Roztoky near Prague. It is a great project with a rich future. God bless him and keep his body and mind in the best of shape!

Jiří discovered a huge heap of dark metamorphosed schist near the entrance of the new car tunnel (part of the motorway bypassing Prague) and made many trips to haul large, flat stones in his trailer. I helped him to start one outcrop with vertical layers and plenty of crevices. Later he constructed other outcrops with a master's inventive style. I like his design of low outcrops with many nice peninsulas surrounded by fine screes, allowing easy access for photographing the plants. The scree is a perfect bed for the seeds of all the active mother plants.

Elsewhere in his playground are raised beds in semi shade. These are made of peat blocks and here it is possible to keep Cassiopes, dwarf Himalayan rhododendrons and *Gentiana,*

Shortia soldanelloides and all sorts of desirable small woodlanders. Plantings of interesting trees for shade and flowering shrubs for their show is the part of his landscaping which needs time for a happy maturing of the garden.

Behind his house is a long new alpine house with his miniature fragile alpines - his collection of species and hybrids of the genus *Dionysia* (he collected some

himself recently in Iran). Here is suitable venue for grafting difficult Daphnes and miniature conifers. He is good at taking cuttings at the right time. Jiří has a good connection with Czech seed collectors (Vladimír Staněk and Vojtěch Holubec), that helps to bring many new alpines for trial here

In part of the garden, along one fence, is a long frame edged with railway sleepers (a gift of mine) that serves as a small nursery for selling plants and keeping some tender mothers for propagating.

There is an unfinished, that is unplanted, limestone crevice garden with a nice limestone grit top dressing, that was built by his talented friend, Martin Brejník in the front of the family house. Brejník was his regular partner for exploring *Daphne petraea* and *Daphne x hendersonii* natural habitats near Italian Mt. Tremalzo.

Jiří Papoušek is an extremely busy man but a lazy writer! He is a

keen organiser of the Czech International Rock Gardening conferences. I worked on two of them with him along with the Master of our Stone Art, Vojtěch Holubec. The third conference is coming up for us in May this year in Průhonice, near Prague.

So it is my privilege to write something about a new growing technique invented by Jiří Papoušek: it is a tunnel with the benefit of tufa walls. It is actually a hybrid of two techniques: a tufa (soft travertine) wall placed in large tunnel, thus providing better cooling and ventilating of the space (here it is 50 m^3).

The basic design of this kind of alpine house filled with tufa was made by the guru of *Dionysia* breeding Michael Kammerlander from Wurzburg, Germany. But one summer day he forgot to shade the glass roof and half of his collection was burnt.

Papoušek's tunnel must be shaded on hot days too, but the air is naturally drafting or running through the tube of tunnel and so the cooling of alpines is easier. Thus there is a run of different temperatures for the air inside and outside the tunnel. The temperatures inside the tunnel range from 1°C – 39°C.

It is sensible to stress SOME ADVANTAGES of growing plants in tufa holes and natural looking tufa crevices in the tunnel compared with uniform pot culture in alpine houses. Plants have a free root run into the porous and softer tufa stone with neutral chemical reaction. The symbiotic relationship of saxatile plants with bacteria and fungi inside

the rock works and plants' lives are prolonged without a need for regular repotting. Evaporation of moisture from the tufa boulders is a bonus for its occupants. The tunnel has closing side walls provided for winter frost-free comfort without the need of artificial heating. Everybody can enjoy earlier flowering because of the glass house effect.

The soft travertine (tufa bought in Slovakia) wall forms a west oriented slope with some boulders offering southern or northern nooks. The wall is 10 m long, 3 m wide and 1.5 – 1.8 metres high. It accommodates about 300 plants. Tunnel covers 20 m^2.

DISADVANTAGES: *Dionysia, Primula allionii, Saxifraga,* the smallest Daphnes and classic alpines from alpine lands have different needs for watering during our crazy seasons. So a general system for watering the area is impossible and trouble with plants going thirsty or rotting from too much moisture sometimes occurred. The owner is conducting a trial using controlled spot watering right now.

It is always a pleasure to visit this place, that great theatre with many attractive actresses seasonally changing dresses. It is a kind of slow and quiet ballet for me and always a dancing place for friendly insects.

Jiří Papoušek is a well known lecturer (soon covering our northern hemisphere from Sweden to Canada) and I wish him a pleasant tour in 2017.

Some Notes on Cyclamen Grown in Tasmania

Ken Gillanders, Tasmania

There are only about eight to nine species found in gardens in recent years. Most of these are good strong growers and set seed freely. Our growing conditions seem favourable for them although we have rather acid soils but they seem to cope quite well. Temperatures in our area are quite mild with summer with highs rarely in the 30°C. Winter can be quite frosty depending where you live (we are in a frost pocket) and we frequently get minus 3-4°C. Rainfall is well distributed throughout the year but January and February can be quite dry at times, also into March.

Cyclamen hederifolium (Ruby Red Seedling - right) is an excellent ground cover among trees, seeding freely. We obtained some seed from the Cyclamen

Society several years ago of *C.h.*'Ruby Red'. This has given us some great dark flowering plants, with a few being almost black-red.

Cyclamen coum (below) are great winter flowering plants. In our old garden at 300 m we used to get quite a lot of snow and the flowers looked great pushing up through it. There does not appear to be any of the sub-sp any more. I have given up myself as they very similar. It increases so freely from seed in the garden and is a great plant for pots or tubs.

Cyclamen pseudibericum (above right) is not common in gardens here but seems to grow well in semi-shade. We have several plants in the garden which are seeding and germinating.

Cyclamen libanoticum (with *Anemone blanda* - right) is not generally seen. I think it prefers more shelter than the other species and the leaves are susceptible to botrytis. Also the seed is best collected and sown in containers for best results.

Cyclamen repandum is a good plant for spring flowers and is a strong grower. It does not increase as freely as *C. coum* or *C. hederifolium*. Some seed we obtained from the Cyclamen Society some time ago was labelled *C. libanoticum* x *C. repandum* (photo right). Plants raised from this cross have

produced foliage intermediate between *C. repandum* and *C. libanoticum* but with very strong flowering stems and the flowers resembling those of *C. repandum*.

Cyclamen mirabile (right) has given us much pleasure, particularly the forms with coloured leaves. We find it needs a good sheltered position and is not as free flowering as some of the others.

Cyclamen persicum (f. alba, left) and *C. graecum* (below) grow and flower well but seem to do best in sunny positions. We are almost at sea level now but formerly had a garden at 300 m. Both of these species were very sparing with their flowers and at times none at all but now at a lower altitude and warmer they flower profusely.

In Member Gardens: Carla and Bill Bischoff

From winter in February, with *Galanthus* and *Cyclamen* bravely showing their heads: to swarms of *Cyclamen*, in March.

Here below *C. coum* on the left and on the right *C. alpinum*. Bill notes that on the latter the petals are more spread and the tops notched:

Mid-March, *Hepatica americana* makes a lovely show.

Their tufa border is now three years old and mid-March the *Saxifraga* are coming on strong.

By mid-April many are coming into full bloom.

David Sellars

Starting Alpines from Seed

Many alpine plants are easy to grow from seed if you follow a few basic guidelines. Good drainage is important so I blend #2 grit with a peat-based seed starter mix. I sow seeds directly onto the mix and then cover with a thin layer of clean grit.

The Ontario Rock Garden Society web page has detailed information on the different treatments that seeds require for germination. I simplify it by dividing seed into "cool" seed and "warm" seed. Cool seeds need a cold moist stratification to encourage spring germination. Stratification simulates the real-world conditions a seed would receive in a frozen winter changing to a warm, wet spring This can be achieved in our climate by leaving the seed pots outside in the winter. However, some seed arrives from the exchanges in February which is too late in most of our winters for sufficient stratification. I save cool seed to plant the following fall. Warm seeds need a temperature of about 20°C to germinate. These can be started indoors under lights in late winter. Valerie Melanson uses the Sunblaster Mini Greenhouse Kit, which is a nifty compact solution.

I keep seed pots at least until the second spring in case of delayed germination. For plants that I really want, I will keep seed pots until the third spring. This spring some wild seed of *Collomia debilis* var *debilis* germinated after being sown in November 2014. This is a beautiful plant which we have seen on Strawberry Mountain in Oregon so I am really glad I didn't discard that pot. I suspect that our recent cold winter helped wake up the *Collomia* seed.

I like to prick out seedlings and repot them as soon as they have developed the first set of true leaves. Leaving the seedlings longer crowds the seedlings and the roots. By pricking out as soon as possible the seedlings grow on much more quickly. I give the seedlings very dilute feeds of liquid fertilizer and make sure they get enough sunlight which they need to grow well. I use shade cloth to reduce the light intensity and prevent drying out of the seedlings.

It is not easy to find rare alpine plants for purchase but if you grow them from seed you will soon have too many!