Alpine Garden Club of B.C.

Alstroemeria pulchella
Sims, en Bot. Mag. 49, lám. 2353, 1822.
Iconotipo de *Alstroemeria ligtu ssp. simsii.*

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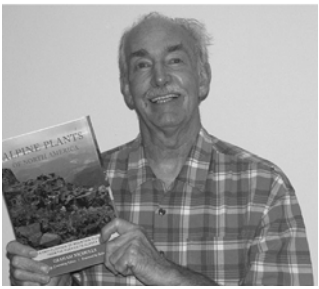
Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month except June, July & August, in the Floral Hall, VanDusen Botanical Garden. Doors and Library open at 7:00pm and Meetings start at 7:30pm sharp with the educational talk. Don't forget to bring a prize for the raffle which goes a long way to paying for the hall rental.

Cover: *Alstroemeria pelegrina* illustration from Alstroemerias de Chile by Mélica Muñoz Schick & Andrés Moreira Muñoz; reviewed on page 47

AGC PROGRAM

April 30th, Saturday: The Spring Plant Sale at St David's United Church (1525 Taylor Way in West Vancouver) As usual set up will be 5-9pm on the evening before and 8:30-11am the morning of the sale. The sale will be open to volunteers *only* at noon and to the public at 1-4pm with cleanup until 5pm. Your help is appreciated at all the above times.



May 11th 2005. Graham Nicholls Author of *Alpine Plants of North America: An Encyclopedia of Mountain Flowers from the Rockies to Alaska*. Check out his (great!) website at **http://members.aol.com/graplant/**

June 8th 2005 A walk through the Alpine Garden at UBC. Meet outside the Shop in the Garden (open until 6:00pm) at **7:00pm.** Curator Brent Hine will take us on a tour through the world's alpine zones and show us his treasures. Bring your camera and keep your fingers crossed for fine weather.

July 14 – 17, 2005. NARGS meeting in St. Johns, Newfoundland - There is a tour following the meeting from July 18 – 22. This should be a marvelous weekend. Full information is available on their website **www.nargs.org/** or **The Newfoundland Rock Garden Society.**

Sept. 7th 2005 *Araucariana – Plants of the Chilean Andes*. Philip MacDougall has recently returned from Chile and will share his experiences.

Oct. 12th 2005 TBA

Nov. 9th 2005 *South African Plants for North West Gardens.* Jim Fox, Manager of Wells Medina Nursery in Seattle will base his talk on his January 2004 botanizing trip to this treasure trove of plants.

Dec. 7th 2005 Christmas Plant Auction and Pot Luck Supper.

Spring 2006 – Richie Steffan, Director of The Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden
Dave Demers, Seed Collecting in Mongolia

This is a spectacular line up of talks and personalities – be sure to mark your calendars as you won't want to miss any of them.

Hikes: Contact Philip MacDougall for more information.

Trillium rivale – drawn by Nicholaas Verbeek

SPRING SHOW 2005
~ by Ian Gillam, Show Secretary

Our Spring Show was held as usual at VanDusen Garden in Vancouver on April 9th and 10th. Mild weather in early spring brought out flowers and it then seemed likely that few would be available at show time. However, cooler weather set in and we had another good show, both as to numbers of entries and their general quality (a total of 312 individual containers compared with 225 last year).

Our judges were again Brent Hine, Bodil Leamy and Bob Woodward in the general section, Cy Happy III for the primulas and Roger Low for the bonsai. The judges completed their task in good time, exercising their wide knowledge of the plants. Thanks to the exhibitors and those members who helped set up, run and take down the show the whole ran with efficiency. Amanda and Louise Offers provided their usual valued skills at arranging entries in an attractive manner. The result provided much of interest for all viewers. Gratifyingly, many spent a long time enjoying the plants and the information available. Disappointingly, total attendance was not high even among our own local members.

The Primula Group provided a decorative display that attracted attention. Its members filled out the primula classes with a range of fine and well presented plants that can't be seen elsewhere, a number from Victoria.

The event was enlivened on Saturday when the hall began to fill with smoke coming through the heating vents. After the hall was cleared the Fire Department arrived aboard several trucks. They found smoke coming from the furnaces but nothing actually on fire. The custodial staff suggested the overheating was due to our repeated requests to have the pre-programmed controls adjusted from tropical to a

temperate environment more suited to alpines. Whether this was so isn't clear but the plants did enjoy a spell on Sunday with the furnaces switched off.

Once again many of the trophies changed hands, indicating that there is real competition. Trophies that did not do so were awarded for quite different exhibits from last year. Rather than attempt to describe any other of the many beautiful entries, trophy winners or not, I will mention only the miniature garden awarded Best in Show since its plants are not listed below. Joe Keller brought back a large oval bonsai dish about a meter long, landscaped as a mountain scene. A rocky prominence was flanked at one side by a sizeable *Tsuga canadensis* 'Curly' and on the other by a sweep of a dwarf rhododendron in full blue flower. The rest of the scene contained mosses and a number of smaller flowering plants. The planting has matured since we saw it last year and has an appearance of ancient and natural beauty. It drew much attention and deserved a separate trophy for effort in maintaining and transporting it.

TROPHIES AWARDED

Best in Show & Best Miniature Garden	Joe Keller
Best Primula - *P. x forsteri*	Joe Keller
Best Gold-laced Polyanthus - *Beeches Premier strain*	Maedythe Martin
Best Rhododendron - *Rh. 'Razorbill'*	Ian Plenderleith
Best Cushion Plant - *Silene acaulis*	Joe Keller
Best Dwarf Shrub - *Cassiope 'Askival'*	Bob Bunn
Best Bulb or Corm - *Cyclamen balearicum*	Daphne Guernsey
Best Bonsai - *Pinus mugho*	Lawrence B. Wick
Best Woodland Plant - *Arisaema thunbergii ssp. urashima*	Frank Dorsey
Best Alpine plant - *Androsace pyrenaica*	Joe Keller
Best Fern - *Polystichum tsussimense*	Katherine Frost
Best Native Bulb or Corm - *Trillium hibbersonii*	Ian Plenderleith
Best Native B.C. Alpine Plant - *Cheilanthes gracillima*	Joe Keller
Best in Expert Class - *Rhodiola ishidae*	Kaz Pelka
Highest Aggregate Points - 88 points	Joe Keller

THE WILLY DICKENSON BEQUEST

The Executive has had several discussions about the best use for this generous bequest from Willy who was a very long-standing and loyal supporter of the Club. In general terms it was felt that the funds should be applied to a specific project or projects in his memory. **We need your ideas and suggestions** and below are just some ideas to get things rolling. We could fund:

- Scholarships/grants for students in horticultural programs with the condition that they write articles for the Bulletin – a "Best Essay" competition?
- Contribute to seed collecting expeditions hoping to benefit our exchange;
- Sponsor a series of speakers or even a symposium locally;
- Sponsor a miniature alpine garden demonstration and competition for children to be held and judged at the Spring Show.

Suggestions by email, phone or mail to Moya please by August 1st for discussion at the September meeting.

TIME WARP
~ by Anon

[As I was surfing the Internet recently, the following appeared on the screen. Some sort of time warp seems to have allowed this fragmentary report on some future show to have leaked back across the years. The screen was quickly saved and printed but the rest of the story was lost.]

.....recent Spring Show of the Alpine Garden Club was well supported and very successful. It was held as usual in recent years in two locations in Vancouver, the B.C. Place Stadium and the Pan Pacific Centre. The teams of judges worked from 2am in order to have time to complete their evaluations before the show opened to the public at noon. Not all their decisions were without controversy, but all the judges were safely transported to the airport by armoured personnel carrier before the emotions of disappointed exhibitors got out of hand.

The ready availability of small climatrons, coupled with the publication of several encyclopedic computer programs detailing the growth conditions optimal for most alpine flowering plants, has removed much of the difficulty of growing exhibition specimens, though there remain difficulties with the snow-making equipment in some models. The more adventurous growers are looking to new challenges with mixed success.

Thus, Class 753 for high altitude lichens was of particular interest. The winning entry was of a series of bright yellow colonies, fully 3cm in diameter, of an unidentified lichen from the Tien Shan presented on a massive granite slab with striking veining of lapis lazuli. This lichen is very sensitive to air pollution and requires supplementary ultra-violet irradiation to maintain its pigmentation. Its owner has grown it in his Vancouver climatron for thirty-five years but has not exhibited it before. (One entry in this class was disqualified when the judges detected artificial enhancement in the form of acrylic paint.)

Class 503 for alpines grown in plastic pots had few entries. These fragile antiques are so sought after for their rarity, their glistening purity and above all the immaculate precision of their form – unmatchable by the potter – that few collectors care to risk using them for their original purpose. However, seen in context they look so much better than in the sterile environment of a museum case.

In the distant past these annual shows were sometimes referred to as Pot Shows and connoisseurs viewed them as such. Purists this year were accommodated in Class 455 for a high-fired, unglazed stoneware pot or pan with complementing top-dressing (plant or plants optional). The winning entry was a roughly rectangular pan in slightly textured Sechelt clay filled with carefully selected flakes of olivine from Tierra del

Fuego. A larger fragment of dark igneous rock from the western Himalaya focused the whole composition.

Those who tire of benches of perfectly grown and rather sterile specimen plants, geometrically centered in well top-dressed pots, were drawn to the classes for naturalistic alpines. The magnificent entry featuring a small Andean meadow between rocky outcrops was passed over by the judges, who felt (off the record) that the inclusion of a small family of chinchillas was pretentious. (During the night the chinchillas are alleged to have burrowed into and grazed upon several other exhibits. Litigation is in process and further comment is out of order.) With this entry ruled out, the winning entry was one that was truly evocative of the alpine wilderness. The shrublet was not identifiable as its leaves had been well chewed by some high-altitude weevil. It also appeared to have been struck by lightning. A final touch of verisimilitude was given by the faint imprint of a hiking boot on a soft patch of the compost.

In Class 37 the judges ruled that, however well grown, *Taraxacum* sp. collected at 8,000 ft. is still ...

NEWFOUNDLAND

~ by Grace Conboy, Burnaby, B.C.

Newfoundland is Britain's oldest colony (1583) and Canada's youngest province (1949). It is the eastern edge of the western world, first reached by Viking explorers. Sometimes referred to as The Rock it is an island of magnificent scenery, untamed and uncultivated with forbidding seascapes. Newfoundland's barren, sub-arctic tundra and innumerable lakes and bogs harbour a great number of plants.

Around St. John's there are many parks including Butter Pot Provincial Park, Pippy Park and the Oxen Pond Botanical Garden. In the lattert we saw cypripediums, cranberries *(Vaccinium macrocarpum)*, partridge berry *(V. vitis-idae)* and *Rhododendron canadense* with pretty lavender flowers. Sheep laurel *(Kalmia angustifolia)*, an attractive flowering shrub though poisonous to sheep and other animals, grew here along with many striking pitcher plants *(Sarracenia purpurea),* and insectivorous plants like the sundews *(Drosera sp.)* growing with them.

On the Bonaventure Peninsula we found fields of daisies and lupins surrounding a lighthouse and cable station. The Avalon Wilderness Wildlife Park had large areas of bog with many pitcher plants - Newfoundland's provincial flower. Sundews also grew here in a sphagnum marsh supporting cotton grass and kalmias. In wooded areas we found clumps of *Cypripedium acaule, Linnaea borealis* and flowering *Tiarella.*

Westbrook Pond at *Gros Morne* is a narrow waterway between cliffs. In its bogs we found *Arethusa bulbosa*, a lovely native orchid with purple-red flowers. The "forest" in this area is an impenetrable thicket of balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) and black spruce (*Picea mariana*) pruned back by wind and frost and known locally as "tuckamore". Newfoundland offers harsh growing conditions that leave large areas unspoiled to support an interesting population of hardy native plants amidst memorable scenery.
(See above for details of the NARGS meeting in Newfoundland in July.)

MY WAY; GROWING LEWISIAS
~ by Hewett Blackman, Wales,UK

I joined the Alpine Garden Society here in 1995 as a possible interest now that I could no longer work after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Our local chairman welcomed me and invited me to see his alpine garden, giving me many plants raised from AGS seed. He also took me around several nurseries, in particular to one specializing in lewisias that grew in a range of pot sizes from 9 to 34cm. The nursery agreed to use my services as a volunteer and to teach me how to grow the plants; and I have attended every Monday for over eight years now. I wish to share with you how I grow lewisias.

The seed sowing mix is soil less, a mix of 60% by volume of peat and 40% of Grodan® (water repellent granulate grade; see note below). To 10L of mix I add a level dessertspoon of slow release fertilizer (six to twelve month grade), one teaspoon of lime and a teaspoon of base fertilizer. Where available an insecticide against vine weevils may be added.

Seeds from my own collection are sown in trays in late September. Most should flower the following season. Seedlings may be pricked out in February or March. Seeds obtained later should be sown as soon as received to benefit from exposure to cold and to improve germination. Each tray is filled with compost close to the top and levelled. It is important not to compress the compost at any stage. The compost is topped with fine gravel and the seeds are sown into the grit. They are then washed in by watering with a fine rose. The tray stands outdoors in an area protected from disturbance, but exposed to the winter weather.

Germination should begin in early spring when the trays should be brought under cover to an area with good light and ventilation. Any watering required must be from below by immersion in a shallow container of clean water. Twenty minutes is sufficient and longer soaking may lead to damping-off disease. Copper fungicide may be added to the water to guard further against this. Seedlings of deciduous lewisias, *L. rediviva, disepala* or *macguirei*, must be only ever be damp and never wet. Even so they may be lost as in nature they are normally under snow all winter and only receive water in springtime.

If plants begin to look untidy with yellowing leaves, resist the urge to clean them until spring. Pulling off unsightly leaves in autumn or winter can result in fungal infection of the wound. In spring such leaves should be carefully pulled off downwards to minimize damage. Lewisias kept over winter in a cold frame may be potted on in spring with added Grodan® around the caudex. Mix about 50% of grit into the new medium and top with pea gravel. If planting into beds, the compost may be covered with pea gravel to as deep as 3in (7.5cm). In such a bed seedlings will appear to replace any plants that may perish. Thus, in areas with wet winters the plants can almost be treated as annuals.

When seedlings are well developed they should be pricked out to individual pots. I tip out the whole tray onto the bench and shake off loose compost from the roots. To the potting compost I add extra Grodan® and again avoid firming the compost into the pots at all stages. Pots are plunged into a sand bed and watered as necessary by transferring them to a tray of water, again for no more than twenty minutes. The pots are allowed to drain on a wire rack before being returned to the plunge bed. Lewisias are tough plants that withstand cold winter conditions followed by hot and rather dry summers. Winter damp and humidity are their enemies.

(Editorial note and comment on Grodan®)

This material is a form of rockwool spun from molten rock and developed in Denmark (hence no doubt the name) as a growing

medium. It is widely used for hydroponic growing, where it provides anchorage for roots and combines good aeration with a moist environment. Check your local hydroponics dealer for availability. It comes in several formats: individual planting cubes, blocks and beads called granulate. These last are offered in either water repellant or water absorbent forms. It is the repellant granulate form that is used by the author. (This may only be available in large bags.)

Such a well-aerated material is also reported to be effective for rooting cuttings. A disadvantage of using loose rockwool in potting compost, is that it will be almost impossible to remove it from the roots formed by young plants. It is likely that such plants will require potting on into similar medium. Roots in a plug of such medium may be difficult to tempt to venture out into ordinary garden soil. Grodan® granulate may be easier to remove as implied in the article above.

The optimal mix of peat and aeration material must depend on the local conditions and need for watering. In areas with warmer and drier conditions than in the mild maritime climate of North Wales a higher proportion of peat may be desirable.

NEW HYPERTUFA FOR OLD
~ by Charles & Mary Bailey

Several years ago I made six hypertufa troughs using the method described in *Creating and Planting Garden Troughs* by Joyce Fingerut and Rex Murfitt, (B. B. Mackey Books, Wayne, Pa., 1999). The hypertufa formula was three parts sieved peat, three parts perlite, and two parts cement (i.e. 25% cement by volume). The instructions also suggested adding acrylic bonding agent and synthetic reinforcing fibres to increase the strength of the mix. I followed these instructions, but each trough within a year or so developed fine cracks along the upper rim that extended some way into the walls of the troughs. These did not detract from the appearance of the troughs, but I was concerned that water filtering into the cracks would cause the troughs gradually to break up during the freeze-thaw cycles of winter.

For my next troughs, I thought it worth trying to discover if there were products other than acrylic bonding agent specifically designed to increase the strength of cement-based projects. Enquiries at the nearest outlet selling masonry supplies yielded nothing. However, by good fortune there was a professional mason standing by the counter who told me that there was no need to buy fancy additives to strengthen

concrete. He said that adding glue of almost any type such as LePages is just as effective as acrylic bonding agent. The adhesives display at the local hardware contained no LePages, only a confusingly varied selection of other types. However, there was one brand that supplied a brochure describing a variety of uses for their product including the strengthening of mixes containing cement. The product is called Weldbond. The Weldbond company's website (**www.weldbond.com**) repeated the information in the brochure and also included a variety of new uses for Weldbond/concrete mixes submitted by customers. This encouraged me to try Weldbond as a bonding agent for hypertufa.

None of the listed uses of Weldbond were for strengthening free-standing structures that had to support considerable weight. Because there was no specific information relevant to my needs, I adapted what seemed the most useful of the information on the website and used a mixture of three parts water and one part Weldbond. It would be a distinct advantage if it were possible to achieve the same strength with less Weldbond because, among all the ingredients I used, Weldbond was much the most expensive. My largest trough, measuring 65 cm long, 40 cm wide and 25 cm deep, required 4L of Weldbond and the cost was $40. Experiments to test the efficacy of a range of different concentrations of Weldbond would settle the question but would take an inordinate amount of time and be prohibitively expensive.

The procedure I used was as follows: I prepared the polystyrene forms as described by Fingerut and Murfitt. To provide for a drain hole, I cut 4cm long sections from rigid plastic vitamin bottles about 5cm in diameter. One was placed at the centre of the base in smaller troughs and two evenly spaced for larger troughs. Packing the hypertufa mix around the drain hole forms meant that the base was 4cm thick at the centre, and care was taken to ensure that it sloped up from there to give a thickness near the walls of about 5cm. Squares of heavy plastic mesh were placed over the top of the drain hole forms and the corners bent down so that they were held securely in the hypertufa mixture as it was built up. This provided support for the soil when the trough was filled.

The dry mix was prepared ahead of time and Weldbond was added to the water and thoroughly shaken just before addition to the dry ingredients. It was added in the amount needed to achieve the appropriate consistency as described by Fingerut and Murfitt, and polypropylene reinforcing fibres (available at any masonry supply store) were incorporated as mixing progressed. The wet mix was used immediately because, based on the Weldbond literature, hypertufa with Weldbond was expected to set faster than that using acrylic bonding agent. For the same reason, it seemed a good idea to prepare only a half batch of hypertufa mix, set it in place, and then prepare the second batch to finish the job. If just one large batch were prepared, the last of the mix might already have begun to set before the trough was finished causing the upper part of the trough to be weaker than the base. With small troughs, however, one batch would probably suffice.

With my large trough, the walls had reached about one-third their final height by the time the first batch was used up. Because it would take a while to prepare the second batch, I painted the tops of the walls, as they were after the first batch was in place, with the 3:1 water/Weldbond mixture. This was to reduce the tendency to dry out and provide adhesion when the second batch was applied. When the walls were at their final height, I scraped (very carefully!) the inner surfaces of the walls to remove gross irregularities and to reduce wall thickness to about 4 cm. Then the trough was wrapped in plastic and left (out of the sun) for 24hrs.

At 24hrs the forms were removed. It was evident that the Weldbond-containing troughs had set as firmly at 24hrs as troughs made with acrylic bonding agent had set at 48 hrs. All texturing, therefore, was performed at 24hrs. This included roughening the exterior with a wire brush and incising shallow grooves to simulate the cracks and striations found in various types of rock. The tops of the walls were sometimes a little uneven and they were levelled with a rasp. After these procedures were complete, the trough was re-wrapped with plastic and left to cure for a month. Periodic spraying with water helped the cure.

When finally unwrapped, the troughs seemed to be as hard as conventional concrete but I declined to put this to the test by hitting them with a hard object. The finished troughs were set outside and periodically washed with a hose to remove lime deposits produced during the curing process. They were then filled with soil and planted. Five troughs were made in 2003 following this procedure and, as of March 2005, none has shown signs of cracking or checking. Because of the success of this modification of the procedure described by Fingerut and Murfitt, I expect to continue with it in future.

One further note: Weldbond is used to seal cracked and broken concrete as a preparatory step when covering the old surface with a thin layer of new concrete. The concentration recommended in the Weldbond literature is one part Weldbond to five parts water. It seemed that this preparation might also prove useful for sealing cracks in the rims of troughs made earlier using acrylic bonding agent. I treated these troughs in 2004 but it's too soon yet to know how successful this was.

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.

Gardening Rule:
When weeding, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it.
If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant and you've probably killed it.

A FUCHSIA MYSTERY

At a recent Fall Plant Sale a member commented "I don't see any alpine plants at this sale". Yes, I have long sold un-alpines at our sales. One I have repeatedly sold is a good hardy fuchsia that came to me un-named from Mary Pearson's garden. It has so far remained unidentified though it must be widely distributed now. The Bulletin offers both a chance to discover its identity and inform other growers of it. The mystery fuchsia is a vigorous upright grower that can reach four feet each season even after being cut to the ground by frost. It bears a succession of medium-sized, single flowers with typically fuchsia-coloured sepals and tube and mauve-blue corolla. The name 'Chillerton Beauty' had been suggested but this is quite distinct, as I discovered on obtaining a plant from Dan Hinkley's nursery. I thought descriptions of 'Pixie' fitted but find that the mystery fuchsia is a much more vigorous grower. A couple of years ago I found a closely similar plant in a display at a Hardy Plant Group meeting in Portland, Oregon, there labeled as 'Pat's Dream'. I wonder if this is a bona fide name? Can anyone help?

~ Margaret Charlton, North Vancouver.

Editorial comment;

Margaret has herself come up with the long-awaited answer to the probable identity of this fine fuchsia, hardy in our favoured coastal climate. Photographs of Fuchsia 'Pat's Dream' are to be found on the Internet and appear to be close to Margaret's mystery plant (though comparing illustrations can be misleading, as we found with 'Chillerton Beauty'.) An experienced local grower of hardy fuchsias identified a flowering stem taken from the garden in early November as 'Pat's Dream'. Conclusive identification awaits side-by-side comparison of the unknown with genuine 'Pat's Dream'. (A member's local nursery offers 'Pat's Dream'.) A possible red herring is a note on the web that 'Pat's Dream' is a synonym of a fuchsia named 'Surprise'. The only illustration of this found on the Internet is indeed very like 'Pat's Dream'.

For those interested in un-alpines, hardy only in milder climates, the Internet offers several sites listing hardy fuchsias, some with photographs. 'Pat's Dream' appears to be unknown outside North America, thus it likely originated on the West Coast. Further information will be of interest.

Note from Moya:

The Spring Show was spectacular and the photos on the following pages can only indicate in a very small way the variety, colour, interest and overall expertise which were demonstrated by those who entered. If you missed this show, you really missed something very special.

Best in Show – Best Miniature Garden – Joe Keller (See page 33)
(Photo: Daniel Mosquin – UBC Botanical Garden)

Gentiana Pumila – Joe Keller Tulipa chrysantha – Kazimir Pelka
(Photos: Ian Gillam – Vancouver)

Dwarf shrubs including *Rhododendron* 'Razorbill' (at rear)
Best Rhododendron – Ian Plenderleith
(Photo: Moya Drummond)

Androsace pyrenica
(Best Alpine – Joe Keller)

Cassiope 'Askival'
Best Dwarf Shrub – Bob Bunn

(Photos: Ian Gillam – Vancouver)

VIETNAM'S ICY MOUNTAINS

Some notes on a presentation by Brian White and Peter Wharton at the Alpine Garden Club's February meeting

Brian White, long-time Club member and plant enthusiast teaches at Capilano College in North Vancouver. His present responsibilities are as coordinator of the program in Tourism Management. One aspect of this is running a project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency to advise on the development of tourism in Vietnam as a means of improving the economy, particularly in the poorest part of that country, the mountainous north. Brian has made a number of trips there with groups of about ten students who gain experience and help train Vietnamese students.

On trips in April and November 2004 Brian explored the high mountains in the Huang Lien Son National Park with park personnel. Here the mountain Fan Si Pan in the park reaches a height if 3142 m (10308 ft) and other peaks approach 3000 m. The flora of the park is not well known and contains species endemic either strictly to these mountains or to Vietnam. Among woody plants there are magnolias, maples, sorbus and oaks in this class. Peter Wharton joined Brian on the expedition in November. As curator of the David Lam Asian Garden at UBC, Peter is familiar with the flora of the region from material in cultivation as well as in the wild since he has made several trips to mountains in Yunnan, China just across the border. He had not previously visited those on the Vietnamese side.

Sa Pa was the initial base in the north. This attractive city in a high valley dominated by very steep and mist-clad mountains was developed under the French colonial administration as a hill station, a refuge from the intense heat and humidity of Hanoi's summers, and then featured many villas in French style. Unfortunately much was destroyed in 1971 during an unsuccessful invasion by China. With assistance and advice from France the town has since been reconstructed. Well-maintained modern hotels and restaurants stand against a backdrop of high, steep slopes covered in evergreen forest. On market days villagers, many in tribal costume, come into town to sell fruits, vegetables and handicrafts. What an attractive and little known place to visit. Oh! But it does rain

quite a lot, reason for choosing to visit at appropriate times, but it rains much more higher in the mountains.

The park and Sa Pa town lie on the great ridge separating the valleys of the Red and the Black rivers in the north-east of Vietnam. Further north the city of Lao Cai may be marked on your atlas right on the border with Yunnan and a likely site for development of trade and tourism from China. The mountains in the park are predominantly limestone with some intrusions of granite. The French referred to them as the Tonkinese Alps though there is no true alpine zone. Rather, by climbing above about the 2300 m/7600 ft level, a region is reached where bamboo thickets do not survive due to the frosts of winter. Snow not uncommonly falls at this level and minimum temperatures are estimated to be –6 to –10°C/ 21 to 14° F. (There are no actual records.) The slopes are also subject to frequent strong winds. Plants from this region are likely to be reasonably hardy in our coastal climate. Indeed, Brian commented that the steep, forested slopes, granite outcrops and the clouds and rain are quite reminiscent of our local North Shore mountains.

But what of the plants? At these altitudes there are trees in the modified form of cloud forest, presenting enchanting views of scattered Himalayan hemlock (*Tsuga dumosa*) amid a general overstorey of gnarled giant rhododendrons that support streamers of lichen or flowering epiphytes, rhododendrons and vacciniums. (Slightly lower there are showy epiphytic orchids, clearly very cool growing.)

In other places there is elfin forest of low shrubs, mostly evergreen and with a variety of leaf textures. Featured among these are smaller rhododendrons and vacciniums, some with showy fruits. Peter was puzzled by wafts of scent whose source he could not locate until he came upon a bush of *Rhodoleia parvipetala* in flower. This is an evergreen member of the *Hamamelidaceae* with reddish pink flowers much like a wych-hazel in shape, very fragrant, and, like many of its relatives, flowering in winter, surely very desirable for our winter gardens.

Brian's interest is more in the small herbs of the forest floor and he showed slides of wonderful flowering plants of uncertain identity, mostly taken on his visit in April. Gesneriads abound in variety. One or more appear to be *Chirita* species while others remain unidentified at present. There are also begonias, showy plants also unidentified as yet, several primulas, a small pleione and an attractive evergreen rosette with tubular pink flowers, not even identified as to family. (Full identification may be a lengthy procedure requiring reference to specimens in scattered herbaria.)

It seems that these mountains contain plants typical of the general Sino-Himalayan flora, some evolved into distinct and endemic forms but also many from more tropical regions that have spread upwards into colder climates than they normally inhabit, for example a *Schefflera*. These may well prove hardy in climates like ours.

A major aim was to collect herbarium specimens to document the flora, partly as an aid to determining sensitive areas to be protected against development. Collection on such steep mountainsides is arduous and potentially hazardous. Preparing specimens by drying in a press after dark in a small tent is a tedious task in cold conditions with frequent, often continuous, rain, damp and violent wind. The question asked after the presentation was "Did you also collect seed and when will we be able try these plants in our own gardens?" Both speakers would like to cultivate these plants themselves but the purpose of their trip was to help economic development in Vietnam so it is inappropriate simply to remove desirable Vietnamese plants. There are the beginnings of a nursery industry in the region with the hope of providing an economic basis for local people while also conserving these horticulturally desirable plants. However, it may be some time before they arrive in our neighbourhood garden centres.

This was a fascinating glimpse of the spectacular scenery and plants of a region few members of the Club were even aware of. It was a privilege to hear Brian and Peter's account of their recent trip. Both hope to return to Vietnam later this year and we look forward to learning more from them**.**

Any errors in the above are those of the reporter. ICG

Comments: Is it likely that the unexpected plants from an almost unknown mountain as far south as Vietnam can be hardy in our northern coastal climate? The atlas shows that almost due north from Fan Si Pan is another mountain famed for its many unusual plants. More than three thousand species of flowering plants are estimated to grow in the several zones of Emei Shan in Sichuan, China (earlier transliterated as Mount Omei in Szechuan.) Since E.H. Wilson collected there for the Veitch nursery in 1903 some of these have become well known in cultivation in temperate climates around the world. Like Fan Si Pan, Emei Shan lacks a true alpine zone but is covered in forests of stature that diminishes with altitude. Positions of the two mountains are;

Fan Si Pan	3143 m/ 10312 ft	22.3° N 103.8° E
Emei Shan	3049 m/ 10003 ft	29.5° N/ 103.3° E
	7.2° difference = 800km/ 500 miles	

What difference might the 7.2° of latitude make in plant hardiness? Seven degrees is the depth of the combined states of Washington and Oregon. Thus 7.2° from Vancouver would take us to Crescent City in the north of California. (On an atlas you can figure the same distance from your own garden.) Yes, it is reliably milder that much further south but it is indeed likely that some of the plants of Fan Si Pan may be hardy here (or at least in Crescent City). A serious difficulty may be the need for generous watering during our typical dry summer periods. These plants may be better suited to the milder parts of the east coast of North America where rainfall is more evenly spread over the year.

Seed exchange reminder/ requests:

Yes, it seems early to be thinking about collecting seeds, but by the time this appears in the bulletin the earliest seeds, in some locations, will already be ripening. Our exchange can only be as good as the seed donations we receive. Again, we thank all of those who sent us seeds last year and previously. A particular thanks to those who take the trouble (or find pleasure) to go into the field and collect wonderful wild seed. **Please,** wherever you are this summer, in the garden or atop some mountain, think of collecting seeds from desirable plants and then send them to us. Then we can offer wonderful things to you on our list.

Another request (plea), it will be a very great help if the **location of collection** can be included for wild collected seeds and a brief description: size, flower color etc. for all but very well known taxa. This type of information saves us a great deal of time and makes the seed more desirable for those ordering. We hope to include more description and information with the seed list in the future.

We wish you all a very safe and enjoyable summer. Ian & Phyllis

Alstroemerias and the Canadian Gardener
By Ian Gillam, Vancouver

Anyone in Canada with an interest in gardening knows David Tarrant. Now the senior member of staff of the University of B.C. Botanical Garden, David hosted the Canadian Gardener television program from the Garden over a period of seventeen years. In that time over five hundred shows were broadcast across the country until the CBC finally discontinued production. Following this, David envisioned making a new television series covering spring around the world and

showing wildflowers and gardens in particularly favoured regions – journeys few of us have a chance to undertake in person.

After much planning this dream recently became reality as a series titled “Spring!” produced by the Home & Garden Channel (HGTV). To make the programs David and a small crew visited areas notable for wildflowers and gardens in British Columbia, eastern Canada, Ireland, Greece, Great Britain, Japan, Holland, Chile, South Africa and Australia. This involved extensive and rather anxious travelling to get to the right places at times of peak bloom and in suitable weather and all was completed within a single year. The resulting programs are broadcast regularly on HGTV. They present spectacular displays of flowers familiar and unfamiliar.

From a recent trip to Chile, following in the footsteps of the plant explorer Harold Comber who introduced *Alstoemeria ligtu* and many other South American plants to our gardens, David brought back a book entitled *“Alstroemerias de Chile”* and has presented this copy to the UBC Botanical Garden library. Written by two professional botanists, it describes the species of Alstroemeria occurring in Chile, where 33 of the 49 recognized species grow. Each is botanically described (in Spanish) and accompanied by a map showing its distribution. Best of all are the illustrations for each species and subspecies. These are fine colour photographic close-ups of plants growing in the wild, well printed on quality paper. Photographs and maps alone make this work of value to growers of these plants whether or not they readily read the text. The increasing availability of seeds of Alstroemeria from cultivated and from wild sources seems to promise that they will become more familiar to growers of alpine plants and the book is a valuable resource. Information on ordering the book may be available from the publisher. And, no! While filming in Chile in the short time allocated David and his crew saw only one species of alstroemeria, the one commonest in cultivation abroad, *A. aurantiaca*.

Alstroemerias de Chile by Mélica Muñoz Schick and Andrés Moreira Muñoz (Taller La Era, Santiago, 2002), 22 X 22 cm, softcover, 140pp. with numerous colour photographic and other illustrations and maps, text in Spanish. (ISBN 956-8201-02-5). The book is featured with sample pages on the publisher’s website at **www.tallerlaera.cl/**

ANNUALS
~ by Linda Verbeek, Burnaby, BC

ANNUALS! ,,,,,, I can just see the reaction. What self-respecting rock gardener deals with annuals? Well, I have to confess that I do grow the standard bedding annuals where the bulbs have died down, but that is not what I am talking about now. I have a small number of annuals that

you won't find in any garden centre, that are basically wild plants, and that I am very fond of. Some even qualify for rock gardens.

First of all there are a few Californians. Of course, California is famous for its annuals, so that is not so surprising. Number one is Fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*). This small plant belongs to the Hydrophyllaceae. It doesn't grow much more than 5 or 10cm high, although it will spread quite a bit wider than that. The leaves are pinnatifid, yellowish green and quite hairy, and the flowers are large, shallow saucers, at least an inch across, glistening white with very fine darker veins and a dark purple spot at the edge of each petal - hence the common name. They like a dry, sunny spot, and when happy, they will cover the whole patch with their delightful flowers. The plant self-sows gently, but doesn't make a nuisance of itself, and I actually find it quite bothersome to collect the seeds, because they fall out as soon as they are ripe. Its only drawback is that it dies down by maybe early July, and soon after you can hardly tell there ever was anything there. It has a sibling, Baby Blue-eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), which is very similar, but has sky blue flowers with a white center. It is just as attractive, but I can't grow it because the cats love it to death. The only time I managed to get a flower was when I enclosed it completely in a teepee-like structure of thorny twigs - and that isn't worth it. But if you don't have cats, or they have different tastes, it is also very worth while. We've seen the two species growing together in the wild, but Baby Blue-eyes is more widespread. You can just tell from the distinctive common names that they are eye-catching.

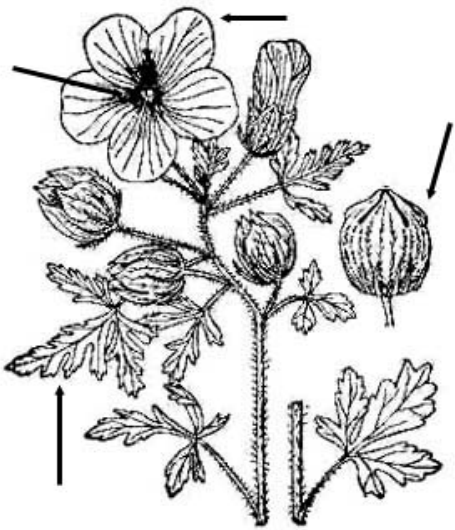
Still in the same family, there is *Phacelia campanularia*. This is a similar plant with very intense deep blue flowers. I don't quite know how to judge its height: 20 years or so ago I grew it and it stayed just as low as the *Nemophilas*, but when I got it again 3 years ago, it grew to be quite rampant - up to 50 cm. Also, that time it gave me the worst rash I have ever had, so perhaps I should not include it with my favourites. But if you get a good form, and aren't allergic, it is a splendid plant.

Another real charmer, and surely suitable for a rock garden, is *Eschscholzia caespitosa*. This is a truly miniature version of the regular California poppy, only about 10 cm tall. It makes a tidy tuft of divided leaves but with almost linear segments, and the small, pale yellow poppy flowers rise above this on very slender stems. I have tried to get it to grow between low spring bulbs so it can fill in when those die down, but it hasn't yet been happy with me. It has occasionally made one or two self-sown seedlings, but I can't say it is established.

My next choice is quite a bit less spectacular. This is *Collomia grandiflora*, in the Polemoniaceae. Its charm is in the flower colour, which is exactly the colour of lox mousse - for those unfortunates who have never had lox mousse, it is a mixture of smoked salmon and sour cream, so that should tell you what colour I mean. The flowers grow in dense heads on top of stiff stems. A small plant might make only one, a big plant will branch several times, each branch carrying a head. They

are, to be honest, most of the time rather untidy, but when they just come out with this most unusual flower colour they give me a lift of the heart. This one self-sows a little more freely, but the young seedlings are easily recognized and pulled out. I generally keep them in an area where there are also bulbs of *Triteleia hyacinthina*, which blooms at about the same time. The combination of white and pale orange heads is quite neat.

After the *Collomia* is over, the *Triodanis leptocarpa* comes into its own. This little annual belongs in the Campanulaceae, and is very similar to the European *Legousia* (Venus's looking glass). This one is again very tidy. It comes up fairly late, makes neat little mounds of small, scalloped leaves, and then produces very tightly branched clusters of starry, dark blue flowers with clear white hearts. Each individual flower is quite small (maybe half an inch), but there are masses of them. Everyone who happens to see the garden when they are in bloom exclaims about them. I think they probably like sun, being Californians, but even though they get quite a bit of shade where they are, the whole show never gets much taller than 20 to 25cm. The plant self-seeds, but mildly, and in 10 years or more has not seriously moved out of its allotted space.



Hibiscus trionum - Line Drawing: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. An Illustrated Flora of the Northern United States and Canada, Second Edition.

Even later is *Hibiscus trionum*. This is truly a Hibiscus, and the flowers are just like the tropical ones except they are creamy white, with a very dark purple centre, almost black. As for all Hibiscus, each flower lasts only one day, but if you have a few plants there are always some smiling at you allowing you to dream for a moment that you are in the tropics. It is not a neat plant, it tends to be sprawling, but it coexists happily with other sprawlers like *Eschscholtzia californica* which in this case is also cream, and *Oenothera speciosa*. It needs heat to germinate which is why it is always so late, but I haven't had much better luck when I try to start the seeds inside to give them a head start. The ones that come up by themselves are usually stronger.

Then there is *Calceolaria hirsuta*. This is not as seasonal as the previous ones and I think it comes from Mexico. It is an upright plant, anywhere from 20 to 50cm high, depending how lush its location is, and

it carries the typical little yellow pouches for most of the summer. This year I had very few of them and I missed them popping up here and there unexpectedly. I haven't had much luck with yellow *Calceolaria*, although the shrubby *C. alba* seems to be doing OK, so I am happy with this one.

My newest acquisition is a Schizanthus. This one definitely does not return in the garden - any seed I've sown outside in winter has died, but if you sow it inside it comes up like cress. It is called *Schizanthus porigent* and I have no idea where the species name comes from or what it refers to. I originally got the seed from Plantworld in Devon, but they don't list it anymore. I assume it comes from S. America, which as far as I know is home to all of them. *S. porigent* can be recognized as a Schizanthus, but it is a far cry from the Poor man's orchid (*S. pinnatus*) one can sometimes buy in pots. The plant has not grown more than 30cm or so tall for me. The flowers are smaller than in the cultivated plant with much narrower petals, giving the whole thing a very airy effect. The flowers are white except for the narrow bottom petal which is purple and which almost looks like a lip. This past summer is the first time it really did well for me and made an attractive show, with airy butterflies floating above the (rather insubstantial) plants. It may be that they really like it hot. Usually I get just enough seed for myself, but this time there was some to spare. I hope some other people will try this one, it is truly unusual.

I am sure there are lots more lovely little annuals, and when you come to think of it maybe I should not have apologized. True, there are virtually no annuals in the alpine, but rock gardeners also like dry-land plants and in dry areas annuals often produce the most spectacular shows. Maybe we should all think about annuals a little more often.

ON BEING EDITOR ~ *by Linda Verbeek*

In honour of our 50th anniversary, your editor has asked me to write something about my time with the bulletin. I didn't actually start out as editor. In January 1986 Bodil Leamy took over as editor from Thea and Pat Foster and I was asked to do the typing and various odds and ends. Not that I was an expert typist, but after I had done the first issue - 24 pages single-spaced - hunting and pecking with 2 fingers more or less, I very quickly decided that this wouldn't do. So I bought a book on touch typing and proceeded to learn. After the first few exercises I practised in my letters home - and I didn't bother to correct those very much, so my parents were often in stitches over all the mistakes, especially excess a's and semicolons. However, I have never ceased

to be thankful for the effort I made then, especially after we acquired a computer. But those first few bulletins were done on an electric typewriter and mistakes were corrected with some sort of white ribbon. We produced five bulletins a year; Bodil's first editorial decision had been to cut the number of issues per year from 10 to five, which meant we had a little breathing space between numbers.

At that time, to prepare the copy for the printer, we worked the old way. All the text was laid out on huge sheets of 11 x 17 inches so that two pages fitted on one sheet - the reduction turned that into one sheet in the bulletin. This had to be done carefully so the pages would run in sequence in the finished product. As a matter of fact, our first bulletin was put together with the help of Audrey and Geoff Williams who had been editors for several years before Thea and Pat. Five of us (that included my husband, who was always a very active presence in the background) around the table, trying to make the articles fit on the pages in a pleasing pattern. I had to leave the spaces for the pictures as I typed and although it didn't happen that first time, afterwards I sometimes had to retype a few paragraphs to make a picture fit somewhere else if that looked better on the finished page. Over time we got a little better at it, but it was always the better part of a day to prepare the final copy.

The first change that occurred was that I bought a computer. This made the typing easier and after a few years, Ken Bell, who was business editor for the Vancouver Sun (or the Province, I am not sure now) volunteered to use his fancy computer programs at the Sun for desktop publishing. That meant that I had to hand in the material on diskette a week or so before and then we would spend an evening at his office putting it all into the desktop program. I no longer had to decide beforehand where the pictures went, but I had to have them all measured so Ken could produce the proper sized holes. I would come away with a printout of the Bulletin as it would be - no 11 x 17 sheets any more - and all that was needed after that was to put the appropriate pictures in the holes, and then it could go to the printer. Except sometimes we still discovered errors after that and they had to be corrected by very carefully gluing strips with the corrections over the incorrect line. Luckily Ken always printed me two copies, so we could usually find the appropriate letters to do this.

During all this time I was not involved with acquiring material - only illustrations. The bulletin has quite a collection of drawings that people have made over the years, and I also scoured the botanical literature for pictures of plants we did not already have. Bodil would deal with getting people to write. I would occasionally do some editing - you never read a text as carefully as when you are copying it (that seems not to be true for the expert typist, but I was always following the meaning) so it was easy to catch small grammatical errors or typing mistakes or whatever. I would also sometimes do some of the background checking, as I was still working at UBC at the time, and had access to a considerable amount of botanical and gardening literature.

In January of 1990 Bodil stepped down and I became editor. It is always easiest to be editor in the beginning because people are grateful that you are doing it and are trying to help out. I was very lucky that Bob Woodward volunteered to write articles - on condition that I gave him a subject. I didn't always find that so easy, but we managed quite a few: Toadlilies (*Trycirtis* sp. Vol. 34, 1991, 12) for example, because I had a number of drawings of them by Anne Aikin that I wanted to use; Brassicaceae (Vol. 35, 1992, 32); Plants With Silver Foliage (Vol. 37, 1994, 9, 34); and more.

I also regularly got contributions from Brian Halliwell in England, mostly on historical subjects or arcane on the naming of plants, which made for a nice change. Of course I couldn't begin to name all the people who wrote one or two articles over the years, sometimes at my suggestion, quite often out of the blue. One year I went for a visit to my parents in Holland and took the membership list thinking that I might be able to visit a garden or two and perhaps make a little article out of that - or maybe, maybe, get someone over there to write one. It so happened that the first person I approached was the editor of the Dutch rock garden group, who lived quite close to my mother. So we eventually wrote something for each other.

By the end of 1995 Ken Bell accepted a new job in the Maritimes and I was left on my own. I bought a desktop publishing program and gave it a try. I had sat beside Ken for 5 years or so by then, and although in the beginning I hadn't a clue what he was doing (and he being a computer wizard, it all flew by), after all those years I thought I could figure it out. And then I realized what a problem I had been to him all that time for the word processing program I was using somehow put a paragraph sign at the end of each line and I had to go through laboriously and wipe them all out,to make the text wrap properly in the publishing program. Ken had occasionally complained about that, but I had never quite understood the problem until I was doing it myself. So just in my tenure I had gone from a basically manual system that must have been the same at least since the Xerox was invented, to a completely computer-based system. I never got to the point of just handing in a diskette - I tried that once, but the program the printer used somehow used one more line per page than I had, and it really messed up my layout – over which I took considerable care. I had handed in a hard copy as well, but nobody had spotted the error and I wasn't willing to try again. I imagine today the Bulletin doesn't see paper until the final version (unless the editor still does her proofreading in hard copy). I hope I won't see the day when it is only available electronically.

Through all those years I had great quality control exercised by my husband who is about the most careful proof-reader you can imagine.

Quality control is an issue that has to be dealt with by every editor. Every author has his or her own style, but in some cases little corrections have to be made if sentences are grammatically incorrect, or clearly ambiguous. It is amazing how easy it is to start a sentence and forget what you were about so that the end doesn't match the beginning! I always felt that I wanted to leave the text as much as possible the way the author had written it to allow each his own voice – even if sometimes the style really irked me.

By 1997 I was ready to move on and gratefully passed the torch to Marcy Tracey, who was editor until this past year. **I do, however, have enough of the editor still in me to end with a plea to everyone to think about writing for the bulletin!** You can't be a gardener and not have stories to tell – be it about a new plant you love, an old one you love, a plant that became a pest, a plant that died for no good reason, a trick you discovered to deal with a problem, or even just the pleasure you get out of plants. It doesn't have to be a three page article – one or two paragraphs are just as welcome. And as you enjoy (I hope) the stories in the bulletin, think how much others would enjoy yours!

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~ compiled by Ian Gillam

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Membership

Please note, under Canada's privacy laws, we are no longer permitted to circulate our membership list giving the personal information about our members unless we get written permission from every member on the list. We hope you will understand that this would be an extremely onerous task, and many members may indeed choose not to have their address, phone number, email etc., published. Consequently, the membership list will not be circulated in future and the saving of time, printing and postage will be allocated to continuously upgrading the quality of the Bulletin – and hopefully adding more colour in future.

~ Moya Drummond, Membership (604-738-6570)

The Alpine Garden Club of B.C. brings together people interested in alpine, native and other hardy plants both in cultivation and in the wild here and abroad. Monthly meetings are held at VanDusen Garden on the second Wednesday of the month and feature a speaker, show of pot-grown plants and discussions. Garden visits, field trips and hikes are planned during the spring and summer. Members participate in the seed exchange, spring show and displays at various events. Our Bulletin distributed to members is also available on our website www.agc-bc.ca.

Student memberships at a reduced rate of $10 per year are available to those studying horticulture, ecology and related topics at recognized colleges and universities. The Club offers an introduction to a wide range of interesting plants, many of which are not commonly found in commerce.