

## TWO DESIRABLE PLANTS

*Dee Boyd*

### *Pteridophyllum racemosum*

I have just been to the Stockton Alpine Show and snapped up this beautiful plant which I haven't come across before.

*Pteridophyllum racemosum* looks like a fern, with its semi-evergreen, frond-like leaves, but it is in fact a rare woodland poppy from the mountainous forests of Japan. From April through to June it produces upright spikes of purest white, pendulous, bell-shaped flowers on stems 20 - 30cm high. It prefers a neutral to acid, humus-rich, loamy soil that is moist but well drained, in either full or partial shade.

**Nursery tips:** *P. racemosum* appreciates a top dressing of old pine needles, if you have any. Propagation is by seed, or by division of the rhizomes after flowering.

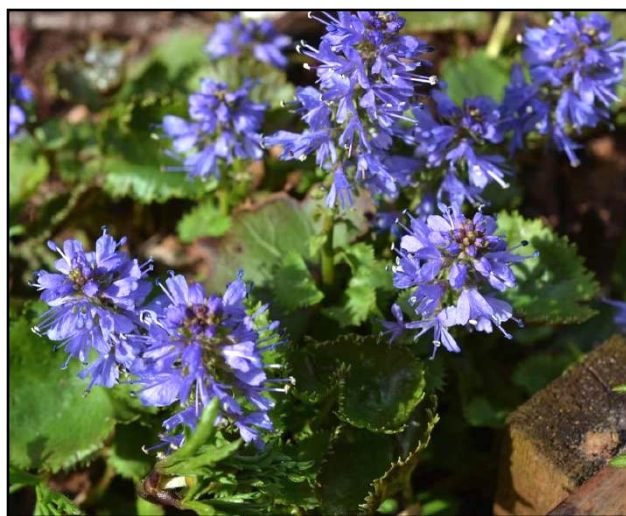


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### *Synthyris missurica* var. *stellata*

I was not familiar with this plant until a year ago, when I spotted it in a garden that was open for charity. Fortunately, I was among the first few to the plant table and managed to buy one of the two available. I think it deserves to be better known.

*S. missurica* var. *stellata* is a rhizomatous member of the plantain family, growing 15cm (6") tall and 25cm (10") across. It produces dense spikes of bell-shaped, violet-blue flowers. The glossy, kidney-shaped, serrated leaves are evergreen, leathery and hairy, and form a neat mound throughout the winter. Preferring a shady, woodland setting in a humus-rich soil that is moist but well drained, it flowers from the end of February through to May, with intermittent flowering after that.



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