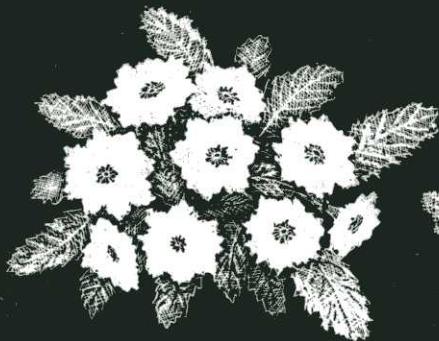


THE BULLETIN OF THE
HARDY PLANT

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SOCIETY

1967



P. WHITEI (BHUTANICA)



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P. AURICULA

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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THE greater part of this year's BULLETIN is devoted to the genus *Salvia*. Mr. Cornish Torbock, a member of the Society who has written about these plants has collected and grown them for many years. He asked that the article be very fully illustrated because he feels that it is frustrating to read about related plants and not to be able to recognise them without detailed examination of their botanical features. The photographs that accompany the article were specially commissioned and were taken by Mr. Kenneth Collier. The Society wishes to record thanks both to Mr. Collier and to the staff of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, for their work in producing this set of illustrations.

We are fortunate to have contributions from Oliver Dawson and Marny Macintosh, both of whom are busy contributors to the general horticultural press. And, we are delighted that Peter F. Perry has provided such charming illustrations to accompany his article on primula gardens.

Best wishes for good gardening in 1968.

Kay N. Sanecki
Hon. Editor

COVER

Peter F. Perry's scraper board illustration of some of the primulas species he discusses on pages 167-170.

AIMS OF THE SOCIETY

The aims of the Society are to further the culture and improvement of hardy herbaceous plants (excluding rock garden plants) and to stimulate interest in such plants both old and new.

Spotlighting Salvias

by CORNISH TORBOCK

THERE are so many salvias which can be grown in this country that I am surprised I have never come across a book on them and thought that perhaps some observations on my first fifty might be of interest. I am treating them entirely from a gardener's point of view—I am no botanist—and my experience of growing them is in a really cold and rather wet climate in Westmorland.

First of all there is the common sage, *Salvia officinalis*, which is not to be despised, and would be much more grown in the flower garden if we had not all been so familiar with it in the kitchen garden since childhood. The purple and pink variegated form is charming but needs replacing by cuttings, as it appears less hardy when old and woody. On the other hand, the white flowered *S. canescens* lives to a ripe old age and I have two plants which must be 30 years old. I find the grey foliage admirable for picking in March to go with primulas from the greenhouse.

Salvia superba, which we used to call *S. virgata nemorosa*, is, in my opinion, one of the six best herbaceous plants. It never needs replanting or tying up and remains in flower for a long time. The dwarf form *lubeca* which I was given from Holland has never done so well with me, but I have great hopes of the new early variety 'May Night' which I bought at Chelsea last year.

Salvia pratensis makes a wonderful display in the Swiss meadows and I have often thought of trying to establish it in the grass here. I believe it is indigenous, but not in the north. It seeds all over the path but can be razed flat after flowering and survives all the traffic after that. *S. s.* var. *baumgartenii* is a particularly fine deep violet form and the pink *rosea* is pretty too, but I pull up the odd white seedlings that do not appeal to me. *S. hians* from Kashmir is a useful deep blue dwarf with a surprisingly large flower and I once saw at Lochinch a brighter blue of a similar type *S. evansianum* but have never grown it. Another good dwarf is *S. jurisicii* with lavender flowers and a cut leaf which did particularly well at St. Pauls', Waldenbury. It has a white form too. I used to grow *S. nutans* which is a brighter blue than most about 3 ft. high, but I have not been able to find the true plant since the war. Nothing I have been sent nods any longer, so how can it be nutans?

Salvia przewalskii is prettier than its name and the flowers are somewhere between mauve and heliotrope, and rather more bell-shaped than most salvias, but as it is a late starter, I seldom get it tied up as well as I should. I have

Salvia forskahlei (opposite above) comes from northern Turkey where it is widespread, and from some regions of Bulgaria. It is a tough-growing perennial—1-2 ft. in height, sometimes slightly taller, with violet-lavender flowers often with a whitish corolla. The flowers are in lax panicles frequently branched.

Salvia superba (opposite below) is a strong-growing perennial of twiggy habit with branching stems up to 4½ ft. in height. The flowers are borne in stiff spikes with conspicuous calyces of purple and pink. One of the best herbaceous plants, sometimes still listed and cultivated erroneously as *S. nemorosa* or *S. virgata nemorosa*.



Above: Salvia forskahlei, and below: Salvia superba.



seen a rosy form of this 3½ ft. salvia at the Edinburgh Botanic Gardens. *S. castanea* is unique in colour, maroon with a black blotch. *S. forskahlei*, which is very near what we used to call *S. gardneriana*, is almost as speckled as a schizanthus and grows about 2½ ft. with me.

The pale blue *azurea* and *uliginosa* are too late to come into flower with me and reluctantly I sent them to warmer homes in the south.

All the foregoing are in shades of blue and mauve, as a general rule. The yellows I class as really wild garden plants. *S. glutinosa* a rather straw yellow in late July and *S. bulleyana* is a better yellow with a chocolate lip. The whites are usually grown for their wonderful grey velvet foliage and as such need keeping dry in winter. This is why *S. aethiopsis*, *argentea* and *rhodopaea* (which I saw once at Edinburgh but did not think was sufficiently distinct from *argentea*) and the *globosa* once seen at Ingwersen's, are not regular members of my establishment. With these exceptions, all the foregoing are perfectly hardy; that is to say they have survived 40°F. frost which I feel few readers have experienced!

My next section are the so-called perennials which in our conditions are much better treated as biennials, as they are so easily raised from seed, and as perennials cannot be relied upon here to come up again every year. I have never known the difference between *S. sclarea* and *turkestanica*. All I know is that there are good coloured forms, and a few poor coloured forms. I can usually pick up enough self-sown seedlings for a nursery row for next year. They are worth looking at from June till the frost.

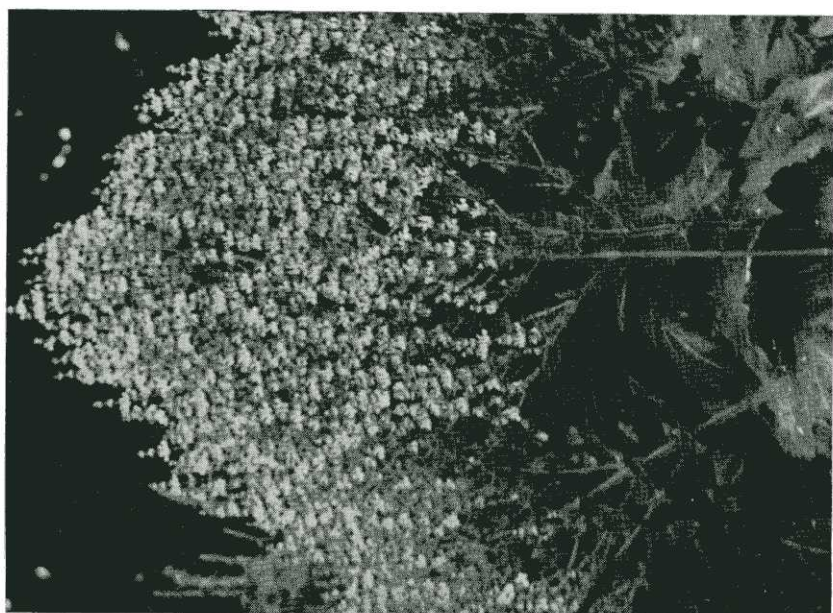
Salvia haematodes is a charming, easily raised plant with its lavender sprays about 3½ ft. high in July, but needs careful placing, as if you have a large patch there is a blank with practically no foliage when you cut it down. *S. dichroa*, 4 ft. with a pronounced white lip is good, but has never survived flowering with me.

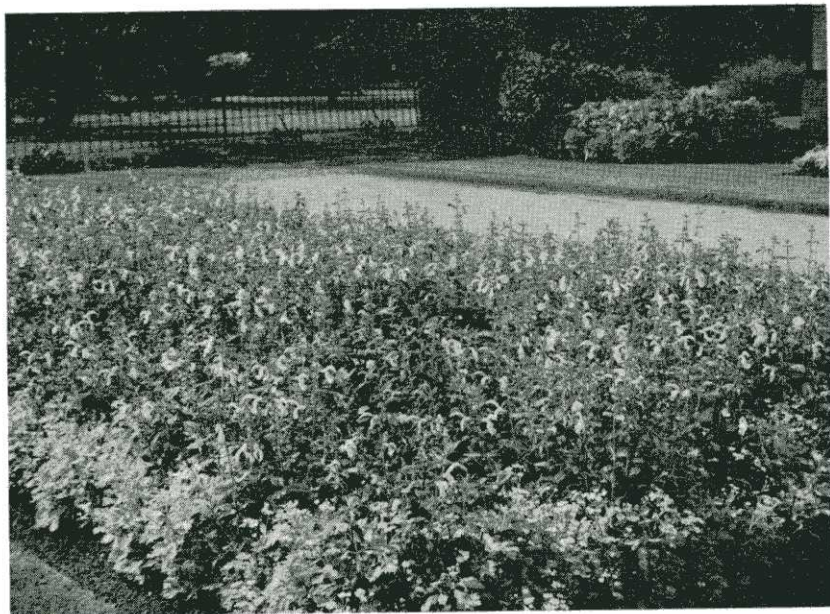
What we used to call *S. verbascifolia*, but what Edinburgh told me is really *brachyphylla*, is very exciting and the lavender flowers look as if they had a velvet bumble bee on them. When you get them nearly 6 ft. high in June they really look remarkable.

An equally remarkable plant is the annual *S. carduacea* with grey velvet leaves like a miniature onopordon and flowers about 9 in. high, mauve with a white lip. I grew it up to the war but have not found seed anywhere since. The annual clary is a good standby in borders particularly pink-tipped clary, which has now got "with it" to such an extent that it is designated 'Pink Sundae'. As *S. horminum* was introduced in 1596, so I think it can survive on its merits without being given fancy names.

Salvia argentea (opposite right) is a biennial producing enormous rosettes of woolly basal leaves. Sometimes, lateral rosettes are produced in successive seasons, tending to make the plant a short-lived perennial. The young silver leaves are shaggy and wrinkled from 5-12 ins. long and provide the best foliage among the salvias.

Salvia aethiopsis (opposite left) is a monocarpic perennial of erect growth, a native of Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, N. Persia and the Caucasus. The white flowers are borne in a very large, much-branched pyramidal panicle and the stems carry them to a height of 3½ ft. The basal leaves are large and rugose and frosty or woolly in appearance.





Above: Salvia patens; below: Salvia sclarea.





Above: Salvia taraxacifolia; below: Salvia bulleyana.



Illustrations on pages 160 and 161:—

Salvia patens (p.160, top) produces large flowers for the genus and here is the form 'Cambridge Blue' is used as a bedding plant at Kew. It produces its real blue flowers late in the summer when, apart from gentians, there is little of this colour in the garden. A native of the mountains of Mexico.

Salvia sclarea (p.160, below) is a European biennial, and best in the form 'Turkestanica' flowering in late July and August. From 3-5 ft. in height the flowers have large bracts, some papery pale but many displaying good blue and rose shades. Seed is sown very freely.

Salvia taraxacifolia (p.161, top) is a North African plant with indented basal leaves, white and downy beneath. The flowers are pale pink with a yellowish spot on the lower lip rendering the whole flower spike an indeterminate pink. The plant varies in height from 9-18 ins. and flowers in July.

Salvia bulleyana (p.161, below) is a mid-summer-flowering, nettle-like plant from the Himalayas. The flowers are yellow, blotched with chocolate to purple on the lip. Reaching 2 ft. in height and requiring the sunniest spot in the garden the plant is somewhat awkward in growth and needs support.

Salvia pratensis (opposite, right) a native plant, but here not as splendid as in the Swiss meadows. Flowers are produced in spikes as much as 18 ins. long, from June to August. The leaves are wrinkled and rounded and sometimes spotted with red, forming a basal clump, but otherwise the plant is of rather untidy growth.

Salvia ambigens (opposite, below) is reputedly tender, but if the stems are not cut down at the end of the season it survives even without a covering of litter. Some 5 ft. in height, it is a plant for the large-scale border. Introduced from Brazil in 1925, it bears rich, deep blue flowers late in the year.

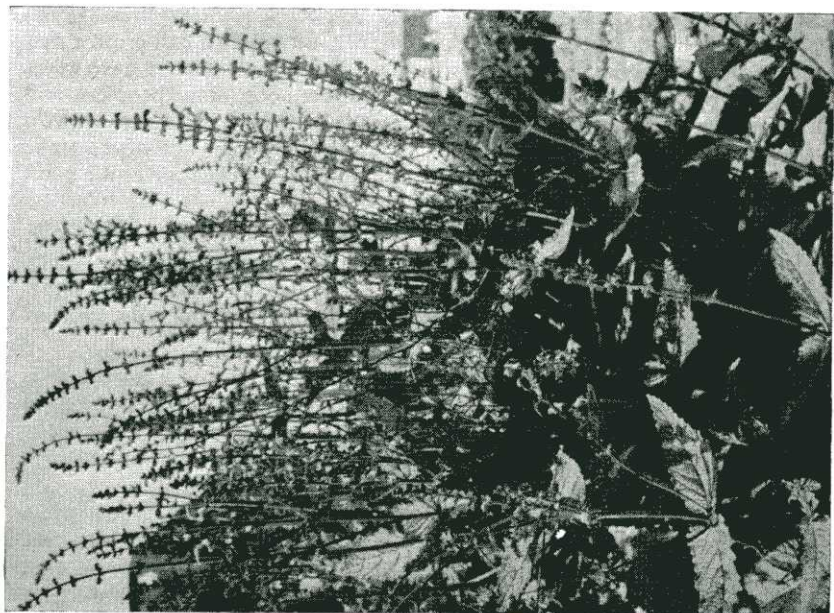
Almost the only hardy salvias which I do not think worth growing are the native *S. verbenaca* which does neither salvia nor verbena any credit and *S. taraxacifolia* from Morocco which is an indeterminate pink.

I seem to have left out *S. hierosolymitana*, *lyrata* and *verticillata*. I know I have seen them, but they have not left any impression on me!

The next sections of salvias I could not honestly call hardy—but they have all been grown outside at various times and those with a more fortunate climate than Westmorland may like some account of them.

S. ambigens and *S. caerulea* appear to be the same plant, which has good, rich, deep-blue flowers and grows outside at Forde Abbey. A smaller and brighter blue *S. chamaedryoides* about 2 ft. high used to be grown by Professor Lyttel near Southampton. *S. patens* and its Cambridge blue form are well-known as bedders—I cannot really say whether from seed or stored tubers do you get the best result. It seems an easy and useful plant either way. *S. coccinea* about 2½ ft. is equally easy from seed, cutting, or boxed for the winter in a cold frame and has a long flowering season. *S. farinacea* is used rather more abroad than in this country but its slender, blue spikes are very attractive. *S. leucantha* has woolly leaves and heliotrope flowers and makes a pretty, low hedge in South Africa but is seldom met outside a greenhouse here.

The next section are the sub-shrubby ones. *S. candelabrum*, flowers purple with a white throat, is more commonly met with than the similar *S. interrupta* which has longer leaves. *S. ringens* is a dwarfer plant about 18 in. and its var. *romantica* which I saw once at Kew has flowers like a pale blue candelabrum.



One of the best new plants I saw last year was *S. recognita* at Bressingham which looked like a pale pink candelabrum. Mr. Bloom also had quite a new colour to me in salvias; *S. buchanani* which I should call puce. I have never seen any salvia approaching that colour before. I suppose some people would call *S. involucrata* magenta, but rosy crimson sounds nicer. The var. *bethellii* is the one usually seen, which has a fat globular bud on the end of the spike which never seems to unfold; nor do I really want it to, as that gives the plant so much character.

Some nurserymen in the past seem to have been confused between *S. grahamii*, *greggii* and *neurepia* but the first is deep crimson and smells of black currents and the second is carmine and has a shiny leaf and the third is somewhat between the two but perhaps a carmine flowering *grahamii* is the simplest description.

Salvia fulgens has bright scarlet tubes of hairy velvet and *gesnerifolia* is supposed to have more abundant and showy flowers, but I have never grown the latter to prove it. The only other scarlet I know of a similar height is the pineapple-scented *S. rutilans* which I have never seen outside a greenhouse.

Two dwarf scarlet shrubs are *S. blepharophylla* which is worth trying on a sunny, sheltered rockery and has dark stems and *S. roemeriana* which I saw in the Botanic Garden at Munich, but it may have been put out for the summer. I forgot to ask that excellent gardener, Dr. Schacht. I see that Robinson says it should be wintered under glass. It struck me as being cherry coloured rather than scarlet. *S. cacaliifolia* I remember once seeing at Parcell, but Sir William Milner was such an incurable optimist that he would plant any tender thing outside. I never saw it on subsequent visits and do not remember meeting it anywhere else.

S. splendens is such a harsh colour that I can find no place for it in this garden. I tried a so-called purple only to find it was a muddy chocolate and a salmon pink got by mistake was equally unfortunate.

This does not pretend to be a scientific or even an exhaustive account of the salvias—but it may remind other enthusiasts of plants they have seen or grown in the past and encourage others to attempt to cultivate more of a race which provides so many winners and such a small proportion of losers.



Hostas and Hellebores

OLIVER DAWSON

HELLEBORE SPECIES

I suppose the first of these that comes to mind is the Christmas rose, *H. niger*, although, to my mind this is by no means the most gardenworthy member of the family. It lives up to its seasonal name only in favoured localities or when it is given cloche protection. This is something of a necessity with the ordinary species. The earliest flowers come on very short stems and without protection are liable to be badly splashed and slug-nibbled. The cultivar 'Potter's Wheel', with broader-petalled flowers than the type, holds them more erect, but is tardier in flowering. To make certain of flowers for Christmas Day, I grow *H. altifolius*, an earlier-flowering form whose white cups are backed with rosy-purple.

The lenten lilies, which, for practical purposes are grouped under the specific title of *orientalis*, are much more vigorous and easy to grow than *H. niger*. Their handsome palmate foliage is as attractive as their many-hued flowers which have a range running from creamy-white to deep maroon, most with the greenish tinge so much in vogue with the flower arrangers at the moment. They are borne in great profusion, and provided the stems are dipped in boiling water for a few seconds as soon as possible after cutting, will last for a week or more in water. This advice, incidentally, applies to the flowers of all the hellebore species and varieties.

There can be no question as to which is the most striking of the many species. This is *H. argutifolius* (syn. *corsicus*) with outsize glaucous spiny leaves and enormous clusters of apple-green flowers on two-foot stems. These retain their beauty for many months and are still attractive when the curious horned seed-pods form. Very similar in appearance, but with a slight rosy tinge to the petals, is the hybrid *H. x sternii*, an introduction from Highdown and a cross between *argutifolius* and *lividus*. Both come into flower in early February and are one of the most heart-warming sights of the early spring meetings of the R.H.S.

Our native hellebore, *H. foetidus* has a more modest charm, but is worthy of a place in any collection. In the wild state it is found mainly on chalk so that the addition of lime to acid soils in which this and, incidentally, other hellebores are growing, is advisable. I give my plants a light dressing of ground limestone every other year or so. The leaves of *H. foetidus* are even more finely divided than those of *H. argutifolius*. In February and March clusters of pale green flowers, each of which is edged with maroon, are borne above the clumps of dark green foliage.

Another native wildling, rarer than the so-called 'stinking hellebore', is *H. viridis* which bears its green flower clusters on ten-inch stems. It has a similar habit of growth to *H. orientalis*.

Readers of *The Times* may have noticed, in a recent article by Jan Stephens, that the rare slate-blue hellebore, *H. torquatus*, has reappeared in garden commerce. This plant would be a feather in any collector's cap, but with the very limited supplies at present available, it is doubtful whether many of us will be able to bag a specimen for some years to come.

HOSTAS

The plantain lilies, or funkias, as these plants were formerly called, are noteworthy mainly for the superb sculptural qualities of their foliage, although the flower spikes, which in some species have a delicate fragrance, can be very attractive. Hostas make first-rate gap-fillers for the mixed border as they will not object to being planted in the shade of taller-growing shrubs.

Their broad, plantain foliage smothers weeds as effectively as the plantain proper can smother large patches of lawn. Unlike the hellebores, hostas disappear completely below ground during winter, leaving so few traces of their presence that, unless their positions are carefully marked, it is easy to damage the new growths during winter tidying-up operations.

They come in a wide range of sizes and leaf textures, from the broad, two-foot, grey-green leaves of *H. sieboldiana* to the very much smaller *H. albomarginata*, whose lanceolate foliage is strikingly margined with cream.

The most widely-grown species is probably *H. fortunei*, whose specific name betrays its oriental origins. This is one of the easiest to grow, rapidly forming large clumps and throwing up spikes of pale lilac flowers in June and July. In the variety '*Albopicta*' the young leaves are variegated with yellow and lime-green, turning a more uniform shade of green as they mature. There is a golden-leaved form, *aurea*, but this is less easy to come by.

H. crispula is noteworthy for its wavy foliage and conspicuous leaf edging of pure white. Another species of similar character is *H. undulata*, whose shining green leaves, centred with white, are delightfully fluted in splendid contrast to the lilac flowers in late summer.

H. plantaginea, which flowers later than most other hostas, has large fragrant flowers, while *H. tardiflora*, blooming later still, in September and October, is a low-growing species with narrow, dark green leaves and lilac-mauve flower spikes.

Perhaps the most striking of them all is *H. undulata* '*Erromena*', 2½ ft. tall with 3 ft. flower stems supporting deep lilac flowers and broad, ovate leaves that make good ground cover.

A less well-known species that warrants a place in a collection is *H. ventricosa*, a handsome plant from eastern Asia with the most strikingly-coloured flowers of any hosta, bell-shaped and deep violet. The leaves are broad and heart-shaped.

Here, then, are two plant groups for the would-be specialist. By a judicious selection from each, it would be possible to transform an uninteresting shady corner of the garden completely, in a combined planting that would provide a feature offering interest, colour and a wealth of cutting material.

Primulas to suit your every need

PETER F. PERRY

MENTION the name 'primula' to the average man, and he will think immediately of those pot plants available to the public about Christmas, and loosely grouped together as 'Greenhouse Primulas'. These include *Primula malacoides*, *P. obconica* and *sinensis*, and the hybrid, *P. kewensis*. The more experienced gardener will know that the common primrose belongs to this family, as do the polyanthus and auricula, and the more enlightened man may be familiar with the drumstick primula, *P. denticulata*, and the tall and stately candelabra primulas, known in the United States of America as 'pagodas'.

In actual fact, there are over 500 species of primula throughout the world, and a countless number of varieties and hybrids being raised. New species are continually being introduced, one of the recent introductions being *P. warshenewskiana* from Afghanistan, where many fine primulas grow.

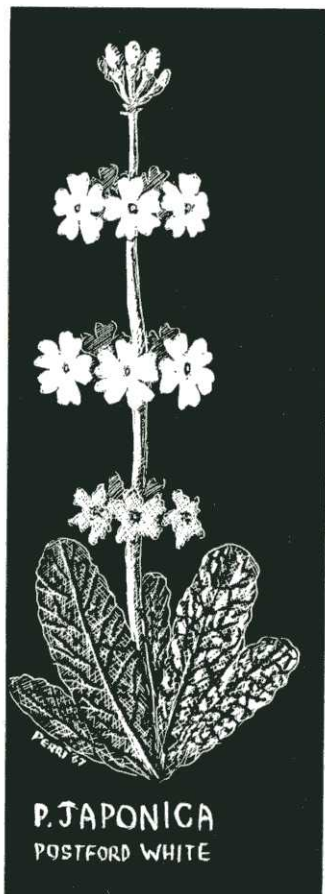
Much of the joy of growing primulas is in the geography of the plants, for each plant can tell its own story about its own particular environment; the strange creatures that share its home, the climate and the wonderful countryside in which it lives.

The oxlip may conjure up pictures of old England, when wolves and wild boar used to roam the woods, and fritillaries grew in the fields with the abundance of the buttercup.

The drumstick primula, and *Primula rosea* come from Tibet, where the people have for centuries been shrouded by a veil of mystery, while the auriculas suggest the gay abandon of the Austrian Tyrol, and Swiss Alps.

The man who likes to grow a range of plants with differing habits and requirements need look no further than the primula family, for the diversity of the primulas and their kin is immense.

There is *P. rosea*, which will bloom when the frost is on the ground, and *P. florindae*, which shows its fragrant yellow blooms as the leaves begin to fall from the trees. The close, neat habit of our own common primrose



contrasts drastically with the tall whorls of flowers of the candelabra primulas, the red-hot-poker form of *P. viali* and the hanging bells of *P. waltonii*.

There are *Primula obristii* and *P. marginata*, which do not mind being a little dry at the roots, and the bog-loving *P. helodoxa*, which will stand being flooded!

In the wide circle of the *Primulaceae*, there is even greater diversity, such as the water violet, which is a true aquatic, and the androsace, which cannot stand dampness!

There is the cyclamen, a tuberous-rooted plant of upright growth, and the scrambling creeping Jenny. There are annuals, biennials and perennials, hardy, half-hardy, and tender plants, upright and prostrate, terrestrial and aquatic. In fact this family embraces almost every conceivable type of plant, for even the primulas themselves require different soil mixtures.

Because I found hardy primulas so fascinating, for the reasons given above, I decided gradually to build up a private collection, my first comer being a common cowslip (*P. veris*) given to me by a friend in Leicestershire, and from here I added the "easy" ones, the common primrose (*P. vulgaris*), polyanthus, and border auriculas.

My appetite whetted, I started looking around for some of the lesser-grown members of the family, and was thrilled when I saw some *Primula denticulata* plants (which were not commonly grown then) in a neighbour's garden. I bravely knocked at the door and offered to buy some from her, but the jolly, motherly woman who answered the door gave me a broad smile—and some roots of the plants *pro gratia*.

From here on the primula bug had really got me, and soon I came to realise that I could fill my entire garden with these plants.

In a hot, dry, sunny spot at the top of the garden, I found my auriculas were thriving, whereas in a boggy corner where the rain collected, *P. rosea* and candelabras such as *P. pulverulenta*, *P. japonica* and *P. helodoxa* were really at home, and under the shade of trees and walls where little else would grow, the numerous varieties of primroses and polyanthus would revel in the conditions.

I now felt that such a collection of plants would need a special form of garden, and, little by little, the idea of log gardening formed in my mind.

As I have made clear, primulas each have their own likes and dislikes in soil mixtures, and the primary idea of a log garden is to provide varying conditions in as little space as possible. A path is built through the log garden, and this is bordered by logs, preferably oak, holly, elm, or other wood which does not rot too quickly, and from here on, banks are built up on either side, using logs, not only to retain the soil, but also to "box off" various soil mixtures, to suit any particular primulas.

Other features of log gardens which I have built have been a marsh, for growing the bog-loving primulas and this is merely a hole lined with *leaky* polythene (this is not for a pond) which is then partly filled with ordinary garden soil, giving enough depth of soil for a free root-run. I always include a pond in my log gardens for I think that water is essential in any garden,

and so interesting when stocked with fish and aquatic plants. I like to take the winding path down below soil level, by way of floral steps, which are steps dug out of the soil, the "risers" of which are framed with small logs, and filled with such low-growing plants as *Primula* 'Wanda' or the miniature *P. pubescens*, and this is quite an attraction, for the visitor to the garden does not always notice the floral steps as he walks down, but is pleasantly surprised when glancing back.

The major and minor boles are a large and a small section, cut out cross-ways, from the trunks of trees, to be set out at vantage points in the log garden. These are scooped out from the top, filled with soil mixtures, and planted with such little gems as *P. minima*, *P. scotica*, *P. farinosa*, and *P. allionii*. Enough space should be left around the edge of the major bole to provide a seat for the visitor. Such adornments as a log "folly" and log furniture may be added at will, but the main attraction of this form of garden is that the old weather-beaten appearance of the logs sets off beautifully the bright, youthful appearance of the primula flowers.

One of the things that puts people off growing primulas in any quantity, is that they seem to think that all primulas bloom in the spring, and that a garden full of primulas would mean a wonderful show at the beginning of the year, and a summer and autumn without flowers and full of green leaves. This is not so, however, as, by careful selection, you can have primulas in flower almost throughout the year.

Many of the primrose cultivars will bloom from the end of January to the beginning of May, and during this period also, come the flowers of *farinosa*, *denticulata*, *clarkei* and *rosea*. May, June and July are the months when the candelabra primulas reach for the sky, and these include *anisiodora*, *japonica* and *pulverulenta*.

Primula capitata, *florindae*, *secundiflora*, *viali* and *waltonii* will carry bloom from July through to September, and the winter months will be brightened with the odd splashes of colour from *Primula altaica*, and its variant, 'Ruffles'.

So there we are; of all the hardy plants available, only primulas can bring the world to your garden, test every aspect of your gardening skill, give you every conceivable scent, as well as habit and colour, give you a show throughout the year, and have a form of gardening created especially for them!



Some Notes on Planting Contrasts

MARION R. BECKER

writes from America after visiting English Gardens

FORTY years ago England was my first foreign country. Cottage gardens lay like bright scatter rugs around my charabanc. Romantic hedges intersected views from one horizon to another affording glimpses of parkland, tidy fields and pastures. Punting along quiet streams in the amazingly long twilights brought alive the watery world of those still fairly recent familiars, Jeremy Fisher and Toad.

I had arrived, not unappreciative of natural beauty, in my own country, for I knew well the woods and shores of Northern Michigan and the rugged forests of my grandfather's holdings along the Mississippi River in Missouri. But I was startled into the realization that cheap land, less permanent ownership scruffy upkeep and ubiquitous billboards, even then, all contributed at home to disturb our bolder vistas. No amount of clean-up campaigns or roadside beautification could ever help us catch up with the respectful integration of man-made features and land that I felt so overwhelmingly those first few weeks in England.

Recently a return trip brought me in close touch with more formal aspects of the Southern English countryside. I know now that in spite of our strenuous gardening activities we, in America, have an even longer way to go to gain the understanding of soil and plant needs for achieving the perfection of growth I found on this visit to almost 50 gardens.

Unfavourable climate can be only part of our excuse. Constant labour and knowledge mixed with love is my English neighbour's magic against our hot, dry summers and variable open winters. But even this formula, unless we live under the comparably moist and temperate conditions of our Northwest Coast, cannot produce the long-lasting robust bloom one finds in England. I think this is why we are often content to settle for relatively less colour.

On my recent trip I failed to recognize some metamorphosed American natives. As I walk down stone stairs into my limey Southern Ohio woodland, *Smilacina racemosa*, the false Solomon's seal makes a ground cover, repeating in lax Hogarth curves a sparsely jewelled jacquard as each stalk terminates in a diagonally poised pearly inflorescence. One of the first plants I thought new to me in the Savill Garden woods was a dense growth about a yard across, closely packed with astilbe-like bloom. Showy and held bolt upright, it turned out to be none other than my false Solomon's seal. The vigour of its leaf drawing was lost at the Savill, but it made a stunning accent.

This same mass-technique I was to see also somewhat less effectively used with *Trillium grandiflorum*, and most impressively by planting goat's beard as tall columns. But they hardly resembled the stretched silhouette of *Aruncus sylvester* exploding its fuzzy pipe-stem cleaners against the rock cliffs of the Smokies.

Another of our wildlings I came upon is *Oenothera missouriensis*, colloquially called "primrose". Etched on rocky tan barrens among red cedar glades its large yellow saucers lie against their grey-green foliage often spreading below well-separated, tall, rigid, sparse-leaved stalks of *Echinacea paradoxa*. These coneflowers carry their burnished auburn centres above long downthrusting petals. Some specimens are pale pink, some creamy-white and others almost magenta, recalling the reddish stems and veinings of the "primroses".

But an oversupply of varied greens is seldom the trouble in my garden, where the lime base and sharp changes in weather preclude so many dark broad-leaved evergreens. Yew and other needled plants need careful massing and balance not to appear as inkblots. Silver and gold accents, so frequently effective against your wealth of green tones, tend here to look simply puny.

In many places in England I was charmed with the outsize accents of rhubarbs, rodgersias and gunneras, and the strategic placing of lysichitum. Bold clumps of the latter against more delicate subjects afforded yet another refreshing contrast in scale making them seem so different from the casual way they dot Oregon lowlands like bright plastic markers. Your skill in manipulating values and in using our natives so dramatically has made me reassess local materials.

I would not have you think that America fails to abound in well-kept conventional, even remarkable gardens but I will never forget the impact of the highly individualized English style. In the best of your gardens there is so often the genius to let well enough alone.

How wise to permit cedar of Lebanon to dominate the vista at Buscot and replace bloom with fluttering doves; to allow the topiary yews at Chilham to set off the valley expanse; to underlay colour along the lists at Dartington Hall; to channel it so concentratedly in the majestic yew rooms at Knights-hayes.

Few of us anywhere in the world command the sites or the abilities that make for such masterpieces. Few of us possess the horticultural brilliance to convey in area after area the rapture one experiences at Sissinghurst. The powerful ornopodium, so difficult to accommodate, unbelievably woolly and aggressive, here reigns with composure among glistening white flowers in their dark green cubicles. The reaching pink thyrsoid eremuri pull attention to their power over the iris, clematis and roses that luxuriate beneath them.

And in the field of colour who among us can match the effects of Mrs. Ludovic Amory or Margery Fish like mad Sunday painters giving their life's blood to realize triumphantly their great intuitive gifts. Gardens such as these can diversify so extravagantly in a small space only because of their masterly touch.

I was painfully aware on my return to America of several planting trends. There is an increasing clutter of dwarf evergreens, a combined reaction no doubt to the wonders of the Gotelli Collection at our National Arboretum, and the rage for bastard bonsai. And in the most unexpected places large stones and small pebbles *a la japonaise* make a stab at creating firm structure and lowering maintenance costs.

This leaves a devotee of hardy plants, who has long been forced to discard the time-consuming delights of a well-stocked perennial border, more determined than ever to find ways of enjoying the old reliables. I am almost ashamed to confess to the dedicated gardeners of the Society some plantings I indulge in near our modern house to avoid the frustrating rigours of upkeep—which include reliance on schoolboys who have seldom used a trowel before they came to work.

One border in front of a curving hedge is *hemerocallis*, solid yellow from late May to mid-August. A tall unnamed variety from Dr. Leonian, which he considered a promising seedling, blooms well for over six weeks and stops perfuming the terrace just as a wide bank of *Hosta grandiflora* begins to scent it from under a protective wall. Neither species objects to the wide *vinca* base from which it rises.

I limit my experiments in recondite plants not in number but to my woodland and its sunny edges, and forego nothing native or exotic—especially bulbs—that I can naturalize there. But I try for ecological harmony and often despair as to where on my eight acres I can make a plant flourish. How I wish I might view the results with dispassion. I hope some of the members of the Society will drop in to see me unexpectedly, as Miss Barbara White did one torrid summer day, and volunteer some welcome advice.



The Hardy Plant Society

by Kay N. Sanecki

THE inception of the National Hardy Plant Society was reported in *Amateur Gardening*, 27th August, 1910 as having taken place in Shrewsbury at a meeting led by A. J. Macself. The first *Year Book* appeared in 1912 and gives a list of 90 members, 28 of whom were vice-presidents and 43 council members! Their enthusiasm seems to have been directed upon their first exhibition on 19th June, 1912 at the R.H.S. Hall, when 15 classes of hardy perennial were included in the schedule with a note to the effect that "in addition to the above classes the Council invite exhibits of new or rare hardy plants".

The Society's first outing is reported to have been on 15th July of the same year to "the world-famous garden" of Sir Frank Crisp (Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames). Half the report is a discussion on reasons for a poor attendance . . . "The day was a brilliant one, the company, by no means so. Some members were handicapped, and not a few greatly disappointed, as we know now full well, by the fixture falling upon a Saturday". The presence of "a lady member" warranted mention!

By 1913 the Veronica Committee had been formed and the "Conference" held at the time of the Shrewsbury Show together with competitive classes for veronicas. Apparently a large percentage of the plants exhibited "appeared under the wrong names" and so a committee was appointed to collect information and to report to the Council and a trial of these plants was arranged at Market Bosworth, Nuneaton, under the direction of Mr. Frank Bouskell, the Society's secretary.

In 1914 the annual outing was to Woodside, Chenies by the kindness of Her Grace, Duchess of Bedford, and 30 or 40 members attended, this time travelling from Marylebone to Chorley Wood Station "in a special saloon". In 1915 another party of some 30 members and friends visited the well-known gardens of Aldenham House, the home of the Hon. Vicary Gibbs. "The journey from London to Elstree was taken by train from St. Pancras and from the station we were driven in wagonettes through the park to the gardens".

There must have been considerable discussion about this time of the possible formation of a British Delphinium Society because the constitution of the National Hardy Plant Society was marked up with the proposed amendments, in the hand of A. J. Macself, the chairman. This is reproduced on page 175, and only conjecture can provide evidence, for the National Hardy Plant Society seems not to have continued in strength and the Delphinium Society seems not to have been formed. No doubt the First World War stalled enthusiasm and yet one wonders why it was not until 1928 that the British Delphinium Society was born.

The first meeting was called at the R.H.S. Hall by A. J. Moir, still affectionately known as Alec to many of us, and 15 members of the trade attended. C. F. Langdon was the first chairman, a position he held for many years, and

S. Halford Roberts became the Honorary Secretary, with A. J. Moir as his assistant. During the 30s and 40s presidents included Mrs. R. E. Docwra who was a tremendously enthusiastic worker, and Anne Lady Brocket, whose garden at Fanhams Hall, Ware used to be the mecca of delphinium lovers. Lord Riddell and Sir Neville Pearson were both presidents as well.

The trials at Wisley were very well supported and the delphinium trial was one of the few flower trials to continue there during the war under the enthusiastic direction of Felix C. Brown. Good varieties were raised during this period by Thomas Carlile, H. G. Wainright from Leeds, Mrs. B. J. Wort, William Richards of Bees Ltd., Messrs. Kelway of Langport, H. J. Chaplin, Mr. Stuart Ogg, R. H. Bath of Wisbech and Mr. Watkins Samuel the raiser of the famous strain of Wrexham delphiniums. Great work was done by Duncan M. Campbell, then Superintendent of Regent's Park and Chairman of the Committee and also by Frank Bishop who raised the popular Bishop delphiniums which were put on the market by Messrs. Bakers of Codsall and Frank Bishop subsequently joined their staff. What a friendly crowd they were and even during the war years their enthusiasm was such that shows and annual dinners went on! A luncheon held at the Waldorf Hotel, Aldwych, was a particular success, followed by a Delphinium Brains Trust, the panel, as I remember being E. R. Janes, from Messrs. Suttons, Tommy Carlile, Duncan Cambell and a fourth person.

The great break through for the delphinium came when Ronald Parrett introduced *Delphinium* 'Daily Express' by which time trade conditions were changing, the war was over and the cost of running the Society rose quickly, and many enthusiasts were ageing, thus the B.D.S. fell into something of the doldrums. At a General Meeting of the Society held on 5th November, 1952 at the R.H.S. New Hall it was decided that "in view of the report of the financial sub-committee and the difficulty of balancing the accounts of the Society as at present constituted the scope of the Society be widened to include other hardy herbaceous plants and that the rules, and if necessary the title of the Society be amended accordingly". *Popular Gardening*, 20th December, 1952 reports:—

"A succession of summers in which the difficulties of holding a big Delphinium show have been barely surmountable have brought the British Delphinium Society to a point when it has to be decided whether to carry on or disband. A proposal is being considered, however, to widen the Society's scope to include other hardy plants . . ."

At that meeting at which this proposal was the subject under discussion Ronald Parrett swayed the vote to continue the Society and gave the B.D.S. the shot in the arm that was necessary. The hardy plant enthusiasts mulled over the question of a society of their own for some time and both Alan Bloom and Will Ingwersen agitated for the formation of the Hardy Plant Society until on 5th March, 1957 under the chairmanship of A. G. L. Hellyer a meeting was called and the Society formed, with Alan Bloom generally recognised as its founder and first chairman.

On the opposite page is a facsimile of the constitution of the National Hardy Plant Society, with proposed amendments in the hands of A. J. Macself, for the constitution of a Delphinium Society.

Draft of Suggested Rules & Byelaws for the
British Delphinium
THE NATIONAL HARDY PLANT SOCIETY.

CONSTITUTION AND RULES.

This Society is constituted for the encouragement, the extension, and the improvement of ~~Hardy Plant~~ ^{Delphinium} culture—whether for the garden for decorative purposes, or for exhibition. ~~Hardy Plants shall be deemed to include Hardy Border, Alpine and Bulbous Plants.~~

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

Delphinium 1—To encourage the production of new and improved varieties of ~~Hardy Plants~~ by examining and reporting upon the merits of such as may be submitted to the Society for the purpose.

2—To collect and disseminate trustworthy information respecting the adaptability of particular kinds ~~of plants~~ to the varied conditions of soil, and locality, throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

3—To undertake trials of plants and families of plants as occasion demands and when circumstances permit.

4—To report, for publication in the annual Journal of the Society, on such plants as have received recognition by the Society during the year.

~~5—To give advice through the Solicitor to the Society to Members on points of Horticultural Law, and at the discretion of the Council to prosecute in flagrant cases of dishonest trading.~~

5. To render all possible service to members and to disseminate information on all matters calculated to further the advancement of Delphinium

RULES

1—That the Society shall be called "The National Hardy Plant Society."
British Delphinium

2—The Society shall consist of Members paying an annual subscription which shall be due and payable on the first of January in each year. ~~Members paying a minimum subscription of 5/- to 10/- shall not be eligible for a seat on the Council. Members paying a subscription of 10/- and upwards shall be entitled to all the advantages of Membership. Members paying a subscription of 1/- shall, ipso facto, become Vice Presidents of the Society. The receipt and acceptance of a subscription by the Treasurer or Secretary shall constitute the payer thereof a Member of the Society. Any Member wishing to relinquish Membership of the Society shall give to the Secretary notice in writing of such his intention not later than the first day of February in any year and in that case shall not be liable to pay his subscription falling due on the previous first of January. A Member giving notice after the first of February shall remain liable for his subscription. Any member wishing to commute his subscription for life may do so by making one payment of Ten Guineas in lieu of an annual subscription of half a guinea, or Six Guineas in lieu of an annual subscription of 5/- such commutation entitles a member so commuting to all the privileges of the corresponding annual subscription.~~ *87/6*

3—Suitable persons may be elected as Honorary Temporary Members or Life Members of the Society (without subscription) at any General Meeting of the Society.

4—A General Meeting of the Society shall be held annually at such time and place as the Council may determine, to receive the report of the Council to pass accounts, to elect the officers, and the Council for the ensuing year and for the transaction of other General Business.

Committee

Committee

Committee

The early years of the Hardy Plant Society were difficult. Financially we could not spread our wings, membership remained low in number and shows and dinners had to be cancelled because of the lack of support. Three years later a meeting was held to assess the future of the Society, and some members present hoped that the Society would be disbanded in order to be able to form another Society that would include shrubs in its scope but the enthusiastic nucleus prevented this from happening. Thus on 30th May, 1960 in the lecture room at the R.H.S. New Hall, one person was again to save a Society and show the courage that was needed. It was a sad meeting, the enthusiasm of such people as Alan Bloom, Will Ingwersen and S. Millar Gault had been stemmed by lack of support and the entire committee resigned with the exception of Miss R. B. Pole. Mr. Millar Gault, the chairman, asked Miss Pole to take over the chair and with no experience and no apparent support she made a rather frail and lonely picture on the platform. Her few followers formed a valiant committee and started the arduous task of infusing life into the inert society. The story of the past ten years has been one of increasing success and buoyancy, due almost entirely to Miss Pole and the present secretary, Miss B. White.



MICHAELMAS DAISIES

These are the last of summer, this the last
Nectarous draught the bees will drink;
Here, on the brink
Of the dark days' abyss,
Is the last bliss
The butterflies will know:
See how, like painted galleons they ride
These languorous, calm seas:
Watch how the basking flies
Like outworn hulks afloat on these
Murmurous, dim lagoons,
Drift to the speckled spider's hid festoons:
Hereby at evening grieve the gnats,
Singing to those with ears to hear,
The swan-song of the year,
Threnody for a flying
Ecstasy sipped, for a summer dying.

MARGARET C. GIBBINS.

The Botanical Garden, Munich

by DAVID BARKER

A SHORT visit to Bavaria last summer was a most pleasant experience, but from the gardener's point of view without many highlights. We stayed a week with friends who had a pleasant garden, on steeply-sloping ground with heavy, moist soil and though their lawns were fun with many wild flowers in them, the garden was not remarkable for its hardy plants. What was done well were the planting of trees and shrubs—many conifers of several kinds and flowering shrubs like potentilla, buddleia and weigelia.

The real highlight was a visit to the Botanical Garden at Munich. Herr Schact, the Director, very kindly showed me the alpine house where there are many great treasures and I enjoyed the famous rock garden. Hardy herbaceous perennials were grown well in a number of borders of symmetrical arrangement in front of the main buildings and though there was not a great amount of variety, nor of originality in plantings, they were worth looking at. Again phloxes were outstanding—great clumps of colour in which 'Starfire' was especially good. I was pleased to see *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold' looking happy for on the whole the cultivars of many genera were German-raised—as one might expect, of course. Heleniums were well represented and clumps of the following varieties were flowering or about to: Baudirektor Linne, Garten Sonne, Goldrausch (new to me and translated perhaps by 'Golden leaf'), Kanaria, Kupfersprudel, Rubinkuppel, Waltraut and Zimbelstern (also new to me and translated as 'Cymbal Star'). There were several varieties of pentstemon and of asters (tall and dwarf)—'Barr's Pink' was just beginning to flower. Coreopsis, heleopsis, *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm' and *Sedum telephium* 'Herbstfreude' were all flowering well. There were several cultivars of hemerocallis, but as far as I saw, there were none of the really modern ones that I can see here in Essex. The tall bearded irises were a mixed bag as far as varieties were concerned—'Great Lakes' and other older (but good) ones, along with newer types like 'Wedding Bouquet' and 'Amethyst Flame'. *Aconitum* 'Spark's Variety' was grown, and there were very attractive clumps of *Miscanthus sinensis gracillimus*. Those are the hardy perennials I made a note of, because they stood out, but of course there was much else to see. A most attractive heather garden with birches and various conifers, especially some of the pyramidal, slower growing varieties, was pleasing to walk through. On the educational side, there were interesting beds of plants, some arranged according to method of pollination—by wind, by insects of various kinds—and others of the national flora. Water-loving types were represented too, and there was a collection of rose species amongst others.

We passed through Belgium both to and from Germany and the two things that I find remain in the memory are the fields of begonias and the vast number and variety of house-plants in practically every house window. I had hoped to be able to go to Wageningen in Holland, to visit the Arboretum there, but I am afraid that time went too quickly and instead we had to hurry to Ostend for our return booking.

FOUR STAR PLANTS

by MARNY MACINTOSH

TRYING to make a brief selection worthy of inclusion under such a classification is one of the most difficult tasks I have ever attempted; so many worthy candidates clamour for admission that putting them on the "short list" is chiefly a matter of personal taste. I have tried therefore, to include those whose performance is satisfactory under ordinary conditions and which do not demand V.I.P. treatment. Regretfully I have left out such populars as delphiniums in favour of less well-known plants, not because I hold the former in less esteem for they are indispensable but simply to introduce some which are not yet so familiar.

I first grew *Liriope grandiflora* 20 years ago since when our gardens, whether on sandy land or heavy soil, have never been without this most attractive member of the *Iridaceae*. Put it in a sunny spot then forget it until in May and June it sends up spikes of triangular white flowers among dark grassy foliage. *Liriope graminifolia* is another very old friend whose close-packed heads of violet-blue resemble a stiffer muscari, blooming in October it is especially valuable and causes frequent questions as to its name.

From the demure to the dramatic! *Kniphofia* 'Samuel's Sensation' is a four-foot giant flaunting an enormous dark lobster-red spire, quite the most astounding kniphofia I know and very easy to manage. Also dazzling in its brilliance is that fairly recent newcomer to the ranks of the geums, *Geum* 'Fire Opal'; scarlet petals are glossed over with fiery orange and being double helps it to last long in bloom.

Equally startling in a colour seldom seen in the border is *Liatris* 'Kobold', curious tufts of shrill magenta-mauve open from the top downwards; it has a particularly long season of flowering and lasts amazingly well in water. Plant behind it that lovely cultivar among the aconitums, "Bressingham Spire"; its branched pyramids of bloom are a grand sight in violet-blue. Then front these two with that delightful perennial penstemon known as 'Garnet' carrying masses of wine-crimson blossoms; these three together make a rich combination.

Among white flowers few are better for display than *Physostegia* 'Summer Snow', branched stems of this newer obedient plant are grouped with snowy tubes. The unusual always attracts attention; *Galtonia princeps* whose white bells are freely washed with green is dwarfer in habit than the well-known *Hyacinthus candicans*. A new rudbeckia called 'White Lustre' will be a challenge to the flower arrangement enthusiasts, with long pallid greeny-white ray florets.

Room must be found for just one more candidate, *Veronica teucrium* 'Blue Fountain'; its season of bloom extends from May to July during which time spikes of dark but bright blue crowd each other.

Many equally worthy plants could have been included but of the above I can speak from personal experience.

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