

BULLETIN

of the

AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY

including

SAXIFLORA

Vol. 3

January-February, 1945

No. 1

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The American Rock Garden Society, incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey, invites you to join with its members in the pursuit of a better understanding of the problems of rock gardening. The annual dues are \$3.50. Address all communications to the home office, 57 Sandford Ave., Plainfield, N. J.

TWO MIDLAND HARBINGERS OF SPRING

PEPPER-AND-SALT

EVEN though we see to it that our rock gardens include evergreen plants to make them attractive during the winter, we all look forward to the time when flowers appear again. It is accordingly appropriate that the midwinter number of the Bulletin contain accounts of certain species which come into bloom so early as to be classed as "harbingers of spring." Several of the bulbous plants discussed by Mr. Craig in our July-August 1944 number produce their flowers in January or February even at latitude 42° in the east. Certain species referred to in other issues,—as *Ornithogalum nutans*, *Sanguinaria canadensis*, *Shortia galacifolia*—are early risers. But they are preceded by the two natives of our midland states pictured on the following page. The first of these, *Erigenia bulbosa*, is one of the few members of the carrot family it is safe to admit to the rock garden.—E.T.W.

SNOW TRILLIUM

SPRING: The pungent smell of damp earth, the bursting buds on the trees and shrubs, the blunt noses of rock plants poking up through the moist soil. Truly a time of rejoicing, a time of thrills, as we search among the dead leaves and protective litter for early rising members of the floral kingdom.

Among those we can count on to gratify our expectations at the very outset of spring is the Dwarf Wake-rob-in or Snow Trillium*, *Trillium nivale*. It grows hereabouts in oak woods on hillsides and on shady banks over limestone, in companionship with Hepaticas, Rue-anemones, and Trout-lilies.

Brought into the garden it is easily contented, asking only a taste of neutral leafmold, shade for part of the day, and an unmolested spot where it may become dormant as soon as the seeds have ripened. Five years ago I brought in a clump from the wild and planted it in ordinary garden soil in full sun. Contrary to expectations, it is still alive, although it does not bloom every year.

This Trillium grows six to eight inches tall, and its three petals are pure white. The plants increase slowly by branching of the tuberous rootstock, in time forming clumps of several stems. Growth from seed is slow, several years being required before blooming size is attained.

Ease of culture, dependability, hardiness, and earliness of blooming make it well worthy of welcome to the rock garden.—A. F. PRIEST, Peru, Iowa.

*In S.P.N. this common name is erroneously allotted to *Trillium grandiflorum*.



In the books *Erigenia bulbosa* is termed Harbinger-of-spring, but country folk call it Pepper-and-salt in allusion to the contrasting blackish red anthers and white petals.



BY EDGAR T. WHERRY

The tiny *Trillium nivale*, as its species epithet indicates, has snow white flowers which open while there is still snow on the ground, so well merits the name of Snow Trillium.

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HOUSE PLANTS FROM THE ROCK GARDEN

FLORENS DE BEVOISE, Greens Farms, Conn.

ROCK gardeners who miss their plants during the dreary months of winter may derive some comfort and pleasure by bringing certain ones into the house. Planted in small containers, or used in dish gardens, they flourish if given the right soil mixture and moisture. With those mentioned below it is not necessary to provide drainage and they are more attractive when planted directly into brass or china containers rather than in clay pots or pans.

Kenilworth-ivy (*Cymbalaria muralis* or *Linaria cymbalaria*) has a charm all its own, standing well apart from its many and rather obtrusive relatives. It has delicate trailing foliage with dainty leaves slightly ruffled on the edge and small lavender and white flowers. It makes an excellent house plant if given a mixture of peat and sand with a small amount of soil. It needs plenty of moisture and not too much sun. Though not supposed to be hardy in the North, has come through many winters in the rock garden at Cronamere with only a light covering of salt hay over its head.

Strawberry-geranium (*Saxifraga sarmentosa*) is usually considered a greenhouse plant, but has proven entirely hardy in the rock garden, trailing its large mottled leaves, which are tinted red beneath, over walls and rocks in shade. This is a native of China and the white flowers come in summer. It is often used in hanging baskets and, while it likes moist shady spots in the rock garden, it does not resent the dry air indoors.

Creeping-Jennie (*Lysimachia nummularia*) grows wild on the English countryside along the banks of streams. Many of the city dwellers use it in their window boxes or in hanging baskets indoors. In this country it is used mostly as ground cover or paving plant, and does its duty nobly, giving a green carpet in sun or shade and a brilliance to the garden when its thousands of golden flowers blossom. I am growing it indoors in various odd Chinese containers and find that it makes quick growth and a charming effect.

A tiny daisy came to us under the name of *Vittadinia triloba*, a native Australian, but as Bailey points out in *Hortus* is probably the Mexican *Erigeron karvinskianus*. Unfortunately it cannot withstand northern winters, but if cut back and planted indoors it will soon bring forth its showers of dainty white daisies. It comes readily from seed and blooms the first year, an odd habit for a perennial. It enjoys a light soil and a sunny situation.

There are many other rock plants which will bring a note of cheer indoors and are suitable for dish gardens. These include the smaller forms of *Sedum*, the trailing *Potentillas*, *Sempervivums*, *Scutellaria indica japonica*, *Bellium minutum*, *Kabschia Saxifrages*, *Tunica saxifraga*, *Sagina subulata*, *Rosa* "Rouletti," the *Drabas*, *Arenaria balearica* and *Arenaria verna aurea*. To give the effect of trees in these gardens, *Ericas* or seedling evergreens may be used.

DOUGLASIA LAEVIGATA

EDITH HARDIN ENGLISH, Seattle, Washington

FROM the majestic, fog-cooled mountains of Washington and Oregon comes the lovely *Douglasia laevigata*, one of the most satisfactory al-pines of the Pacific Northwest. Cheerfully it meets all the requirements of a desirable rock plant: it is neat, well-behaved, produces an abundance of showy flowers, is easy to grow and can be propagated readily.

The foliage, in dainty little rosettes, forms a suitable background for the wealth of bright pink flowers. In the wild *D. laevigata* is found along the base of rock faces, in crevices or on open scree slopes. There it is a thing of great beauty, its magnificent surroundings adding to its attractiveness. In the Olympic Mountains, especially, its brilliant color makes a striking display against the rugged rocks.



BY CARL S. ENGLISH

Douglasia laevigata growing at 5500 feet elevation on Mt. Angeles, Olympic Peninsula, Washington.

In cultivation the plants grow most successfully in a mixture of humus soil and crushed rock. In the vicinity of Seattle they seem equally tolerant of part shade or full sun. In the latter location, however, they must not be allowed to become too dry. In Eastern gardens part shade would seem more advisable.

The strain of this species that comes from the Olympic Mountains is, perhaps, the most desirable one for garden use because of the ease with which it may be propagated vegetatively by layering or by cuttings of the branches. By this means the identical outstanding qualities of especially choice individuals are reproduced in numerous young plants. The more typically tap-rooted plants from the Cascade Mountains are most satisfactorily propagated by seed.

The generic name of this primrose relative honors the Scotch botanist, David Douglas, who explored in the Northwest in the years 1823 and 1829. The specific name *laevigata*, meaning smooth, refers to the nearly glabrous leaves and their entire margins.

HALL'S AND HARBOUR'S PENSTEMONS

MARK and CLAIRE NORTON, Laporte, Colorado

ELIHU HALL and J. P. Harbour are almost legendary figures in the world of botany, so little is actually known of the men themselves. But come to the Rockies they did, in 1862, and herbarium sheets distributed under their names comprise a collection of some of the most interesting and noteworthy alpinists of the Central Rocky Mountains.

Numbers 388 and 396 of the Hall and Harbour distribution are of penstemons, both collected beyond timber in the true arctic-alpine zone of Colorado. When Asa Gray described these two new species in Volume Six of the Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he commemorated the name of the two collectors by applying to the first the species epithet *halli*; to the second, *harbouri*.

Both are endowed with constitutions and characters which make of them excellent possibilities for the rock garden. Despite the rarefied atmosphere, the life of storm and cold and sudden summer rains, the long winter's dormancy, the lean diet, to which they are accustomed in their natural home, they take to culture in lowland gardens of ordinary good soil very satisfactorily. They sustain long periods of drought and still give a good account of themselves.

The first, *Penstemon halli*, belongs to the *Glabri* section of the family, those penstemons which generally have handsome fat flowers, good leafage and several spike-like flower stems to a plant. It is dwarf, under eight inches even with the best of treatment, the flowers a nice shade of blue, showing white in the inflated throat. We collected it first on the steep, grassy, south facing slopes just out of timber on Mt. McClellan, transplanting it immediately to loamy, loose soil in Denver where it thrived and increased the size of its clumps for several seasons, and then again moved it to an elevation of 9200 feet, near its natal home, planting it this time in a rockery where the granitic soil had been generously enriched with hop compost. We lost our original specimens this past season through neglect, leaving them overlong in a crowded flat to which they had been transferred for moving to a new location.

Penstemon harbouri is of a much different type, belonging according to Pennell to the *Graciles* section, the plants spreading in tufts, the compact flower clusters reaching a height of but two to three inches above the ground. The tufted plants will sometimes cover a space six or eight inches in diameter, and when in bloom give the appearance, from a little distance, of a tightly packed bouquet of sweet peas, a wonderfully striking sight when suddenly met with in the loose scree at the foot of a disintegrating cliff or in the midst of an extensive boulder field. For there it is that Harbour's penstemon makes its home, and one wonders upon what it finds to subsist in the rock chips where its roots have spread and burrowed.

When one of these tufts, or clumps, is turned out with a pickaway, the plant literally falls apart, being in reality a collection of straggly roots loosely joined, always fragile. From a woody base are sent up the bronzy-red stems with their few, paired, nearly oval leaves. These leaves are especially attractive, leathery and dark green above, their undersurfaces the red-bronze of the stems. The seed stage, too, is not without beauty, the bronzy seed vessels large for the size of the plant. The open-throated

flowers are described as "violet." They are in pressed specimens, but are of that coloring commonly designated as "orchid" in all we have seen in the wild.

For best garden effect, a clump is reformed with the natural divisions, or offsets; or if started from seed, several seedlings planted together to give the appearance of a tuft.

We first met this plant on a wind-swept rock slide on Mt. McClellan, east neighbor to Gray's Peak, where we like to think the mysterious Mr. Harbour might have found it while wandering off alone during a collecting trip with Dr. Parry and Mr. Hall to this region. It was then out of bloom, but we were much impressed by its foliage beauty. We saw it in bloom for the first time on the headwaters of Clear Creek, in the scree beside a red-brown cliff, scarcely a hundred yards below the ridge of the Continental Divide, several dozen clumps making of this spot a magnificent show. Seeing the sort of soil, or lack of soil, in which it preferred to grow, we hoped little of it in the garden. We were pleasantly surprised. When its toes were set in a humus-filled rooting bed it soon took hold, and, as the saying goes, "really went to town," and without losing its characteristic alpine habit. Moved again to a compost of granite grit and hop compost it behaved well and produced bloom. But most surprising of all its performances has been the way it withstood drought this past season, divisions planted in a flat surviving when common rock garden plants, long in cultivation, failed to make the grade. It finally took a flock of scratching, voracious chickens on the loose to discourage the plants' efforts.

Our thanks to Hall and Harbour; may these penstemons bearing their names some day grace our rock gardens.

THREE ROCK GARDEN ERICAS

THE ERICAS are small flowering evergreens against whose dark foliage the flowers have exceeding brilliance. They mostly require an acid soil, porous and light, and full sun. In some kinds the flowers are in clusters at the ends of the stems, forming compact "crowns," in others — the more usual case — alternating along the stems in small bunches or singly. There are great variations in plant size, from huge shrubs to little mounds scarcely three inches high which fit admirably into rock gardens.

Erica vagans St. Keverne has vivid green foliage and grows 4 to 6 inches high, making widening mats. Its flowers are open bells in clusters at the ends of 2-inch stems, of a soft pure pink hue. The buds are white and make a pretty, sparkling pattern against the foliage. A planting of this heath adjacent to a patch of the pure light blue-flowering *Gentiana septemfida* would make a ravishing combination for July.

Two hybrid *Ericas* we have tried are *E. mackaii* and *E. darleyensis* Dawn. They are low-growing, and deserve a prominent place in the rock garden, producing an abundance of bluish pink closed bells in July and August.—WALTER D. BLAIR, Nantucket, Mass.

SAXIFLORA

UNDER date of December 31, 1938, a 6-member committee of the American Rock Garden Society announced a new venture:

"The dissemination of accurate knowledge of plants suitable for rock gardens is one of the purposes of the American Rock Garden Society. In the promotion of this, the executive board has authorized the publication of a series of leaflets, each to present a careful study of an individual kind of plant with particular attention to identification, nomenclature, and culture . . .

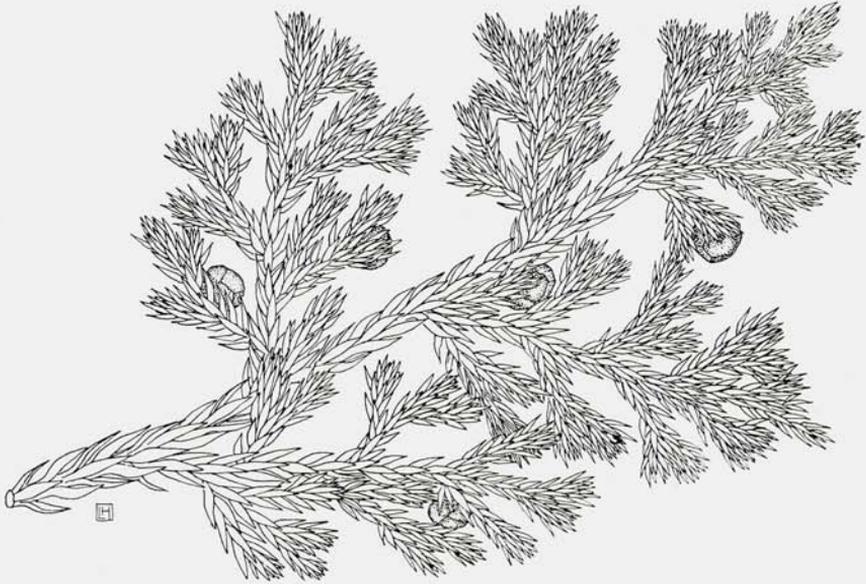
"Saxiflora — Rock Flora — seems particularly appropriate as the name for our new publication, which will be devoted to plants suitable for cultivation in rock gardens in North America. A loose-leaf form has been adopted so that the leaflets may be arranged in any order which suits the convenience of the owner."

Under this plan 16 leaflets were issued in two sets as listed below. When the Bulletin was started in 1943, it was decided to include a Saxiflora article in each of the bimonthly numbers, and 5 were actually so published. Difficulty in obtaining manuscripts and illustrations led to the discontinuance of this plan in 1944. Now, however, Mr. P. J. van Melle, one of the leaders in starting the project in the first place, is sponsoring a revival of it. He will appreciate help from all our members in suggesting how the articles can be made of the greatest use to them. And especially welcome will be contributions of articles for future numbers. If you can't supply all the needed technical data or the illustrations, give the Editorial Board an opportunity to do so.

The subjects treated thus far comprised:

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1. <i>Daboecia cantabrica</i> (Ericaceae) | E. J. Alexander | 12/31/'38 |
| 2. <i>Chrysogonum virginianum</i> (Asteraceae) | James G. Esson | " |
| 3. <i>Epimedium macranthum</i> (Berberidaceae) | T. H. Everett | " |
| 4. <i>Alyssum scardicum</i> (Cruciferae) | M. Free and H. K. Svenson | " |
| 5. <i>Saxifraga cortusaeifolia</i> (Saxifragaceae) | P. J. van Melle | " |
| 6. <i>Daphne genkwa</i> (Thymelaeaceae) | James G. Esson | " |
| 7. <i>Primula vulgaris</i> (Primulaceae) | T. H. Everett | " |
| 8. <i>Scilla sinensis</i> (Liliaceae) | P. J. van Melle | " |
| 9. <i>Phlox stolonifera</i> (Polemoniaceae) | Edgar T. Wherry | 12/31/'40 |
| 10. <i>Sedum sieboldii</i> (Crassulaceae) | E. J. Alexander | " |
| 11. <i>Convolvulus mauritanicus</i> (Convolvulaceae) | Ira N. Gabrielson | " |
| 12. <i>Erodium chamaedryoides roseum</i> (Geraniaceae) | Henrietta Stout | " |
| 13. <i>Petrophytum hendersoni</i> (Rosaceae) | W. H. A. Preece | " |
| 14. <i>Globularia incanescens</i> (Globulariaceae) | P. J. van Melle | " |
| 15. <i>Gentiana septemfida</i> (Gentianaceae) | Joseph J. Elliott | " |
| 16. <i>Verbena pulchella maonetti</i> (Verbenaceae) | H. N. Moldenke | " |
| 17. <i>Coreopsis auriculata</i> (Asteraceae) | Edgar T. Wherry | 4/15/'43 |
| 18. <i>Phlox amoena</i> (& <i>procumbens</i>) (Polemoniaceae) | Edgar T. Wherry | 6/ 1/'43 |
| 19. <i>Astragalus tridactylus</i> (Leguminosae) | Claude A. Barr | 8/ 1/'43 |
| 20. <i>Dodecatheon amethystinum</i> (Primulaceae) | Edgar T. Wherry | 10/ 1/'43 |
| 21. <i>Townsendia parryi</i> variety (Asteraceae) | Claude A. Barr | 12/ 1/'43 |

The earlier issues are for sale at 10 cents per copy. Later ones can be clipped from copies of the Bulletin. Is your set complete?—E.T.W.



COURTESY D. HILL NURSERY CO.

Juniperus procumbens nana
PINACEAE

JUNIPERUS PROCUMBENS NANA

MOST of the low-growing Junipers attain widths too great for accommodation in the small rock garden, but not so the subject of this note.

Some 25 years ago a number of plants of it appeared in an importation from Japan of typical *J. procumbens*, carried out by the D. Hill Nursery Company of Dundee, Illinois. These were propagated by the importers and introduced into the trade under the name "Juniperus japonica nana," the species concerned being at that time listed in most catalogs as *J. japonica*. In their 1942 catalog, the name was changed to *J. procumbens nana*.

In comparison with typical *Juniperus procumbens*, the present plant shows a greatly reduced rate of growth, and a strikingly dwarf, compact habit with prominent horizontal shelving of the main branches over one another. Along these appear spreading lateral branchlets of graduated length, forming symmetrically bilateral flattish mostly broadly triangular patterns. These lateral shoots in turn repeat the process; while throughout the whole stem system there appear crowded short erect ultimate branchlets. The latter create, especially about the center of the clump, a more or less densely cushioned effect, and lend to the entire plant an accentuated silvery gray aspect.

On the lower surface of the leaves, which are all spreading, non-jointed, and in whorls of 3, the ordinary form of *J. procumbens* shows whitish marginal bands extending downward from near the base of the free part well into the decurrent part. In the variant under discussion, however, these are more or less faint or practically absent.

Some individuals retain these features indefinitely; others tend to revert to a taller form, differing from the familiar *J. procumbens* in less regular development so that the silhouette is not so well rounded, and in the persisting faintness of the white leaf-bands. This suggests a branch-sport derivation of the dwarf plant, though it could scarcely have risen from any phase of *J. procumbens* in cultivation in this country.

In this species of *Juniperus* male catkins are unknown, the fruits apparently developing parthenogenetically. No fruits have been found on typically "nana" forms, but they are produced occasionally by reverting plants. The young fruits are covered with bluish "bloom," and at maturity, some time during their second season, become blackish purple. They are then more or less flattened at base and apex and somewhat 3 or 4-lobed around the middle. Borne on very short stalks on the lower side of the sprays, they are scarcely visible from above the plant. The number of seeds varies from two to five.

Reversion of dwarf plants can usually be arrested by keeping them on a lean diet, with their roots cramped between rocks. I have seen some so placed which though 20 years old are only 4 feet wide. Even for the smallest rock gardens, then, we have here a delightful, individualistic subject, of oriental aspect; with a look of age, yet with a repressed gesture of graceful movement and an exquisite lilt and rhythm in the curves of the projecting branchlet-tips. Against a bold mass of rock, it stands forth like a Chinese symbol, brushed in silver, for all manner of graces that spell "rock garden."—P. J. VAN MELLE.

Juniperus procumbens (var.) *nana* Grootend. ex Hornibr. Hornibrook, Dwarf and Slow-growing Conifers: 122, 1938. ("J. japonica nana" Hort., ex cat. D. Hill Nursery Co.)

ROCK GARDEN CONIFERS IN SOUTHERN NURSERIES

ELIZABETH LAWRENCE, Raleigh, N. C.

EVER since I began to collect plants systematically instead of merely taking pleasure in those that chanced to come my way, I have been annoyed when I failed to find in the trade the plant that I wanted. But once when I was making the rounds of the nurseries, it occurred to me that it would be much wiser to learn what the plantsmen have to offer, then to deplore what they lack. Poking about in this amiable frame of mind, I found a number of interesting shrubs that I did not know about, and that did not appear in the catalogues. I was particularly delighted with the dwarf conifers.

In a Maryland nursery I found two dwarf plum-yews, and a spreading form of the English yew. The Japanese plum-yew, *Cephalotaxus drupacea*, is typically a tree to thirty feet tall, but one form found in the nursery is low and spreading. This is probably what Rehder calls variety *nana*. I saw one eight year old plant that had not got above eighteen inches. The other dwarf plum-yew is a form of variety *pedunculata* (or *fastigiata*) listed as "*C. pedunculata repandens*." Six year old plants were less than a foot tall. The dwarf form of English yew, *Taxus baccata repandens*, is said to grow eventually to three feet, but eighteen inch specimens have got no taller in my garden in five years, though they have spread considerably.

In the same nursery I came across specimens of the rare *Cedrus libani* var. *nana* (usually listed as var. Comte de Dijon) which grows from two and a half to three feet, and two dwarf forms of *Cryptomeria japonica*. The one known as *C. japonica nana* is a slow-growing pygmy said not to exceed eighteen inches, and less than that in the nursery specimens. The form known as *elegans* or *compacta* is said to grow at the rate of six inches a year, and so will make a larger shrub. It is not so hardy as the type.

In a Virginia nursery I found *Cryptomeria japonica* "var. *vilmoriniana*," (a name not in Rehder) an enchanting fluffy ball about two feet high. This is very symmetrical, and could well be used as an accent in a formal garden. All of the dwarf cryptomerias are light green in color, and turn a reddish brown in cold weather. They are easy to grow, and like sun.

In a Georgia nursery there were several specimens of *Cedrus atlantica* "var. *pygmaea*," (likewise not in Rehder) stout, bristling little bushes about two feet high. This discovery was my last before gas rationing; when we can take to the road again, I shall set out in search of further treasure.

A LITTLE-KNOWN AMARYLLID

THE NAME *Rhodohypoxis bauri* has been applied to a small South African bulb. The foliage is grass-like and rather long-hairy. It grows from four inches in the sun to six in the shade. The corolla is six-parted and in the type of a lovely deep carmine color. In *R. bauri platypetala* the hue is dead-white, and it is usually classed as a variety. It is more prolific by far. Natural color variations of the two will occur in any mixed planting. They grow in soil through which water runs readily. I have often been asked if they are hardy. Last winter I tried to put this to the test. The white color-form came through splendidly; the carmine one did not; however, a huge dog elected to plant an enormous joint just where I had these bulbs. Not only did he dig deeply, but in walking about did much more damage. And so the question is still moot.—E.M.F.

PHLOX NIVALIS AZURE

EDGAR T. WHERRY, Philadelphia, Pa.

IN THE September 15th, 1944, number of *Horticulture*, reference was made to three striking color-forms of *Phlox nivalis* now available to rock gardeners,—the salmon-pink *Camla*, the crimson *Sylvestris*, and the pure white *Gladwyne*. As recorded in the *Bulletin*, volume 1, page 3, 1943, the discoverer of the last, Mrs. Mary G. Henry, also collected in Georgia a clone with flowers of an unusual hue,—a light lavender which appears almost blue. The flower form is good, and like its relative the plant has the merit of blooming at intervals nearly throughout the growing season. As a horticultural name for it Mrs. Henry suggested *Azure*. It is now being propagated for distribution.



BY EDGAR T. WHERRY

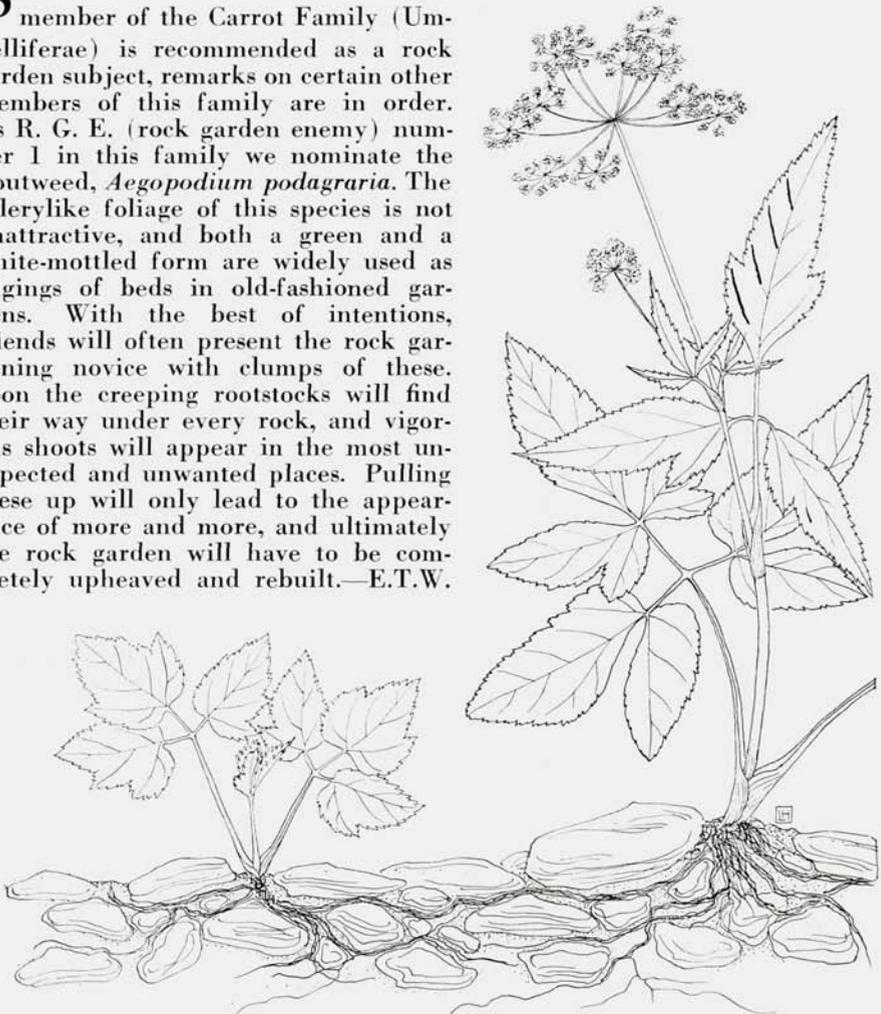
Phlox nivalis *Azure* has flowers of an unusual bluish hue.

To answer the oft-repeated question as to how to tell this *Phlox* from related species,—it tends to have relatively open mats, broad leaves, dense glandularity, large flowers, shallow notches in petal blades, and deep-seated stamens. To make sure, grasp opposite sides of a corolla-limb and pull until the corolla-tube is split to the base, then discard it. Now look for the triple group of stigmas at the tip of the slender style. If these extend well above the sepal-tips, the species represented is *P. subulata*; but if they lie hidden down in the calyx-tube, it is *P. nivalis*.



GOUTWEED

SINCE in this issue of the Bulletin a member of the Carrot Family (Umbelliferae) is recommended as a rock garden subject, remarks on certain other members of this family are in order. As R. G. E. (rock garden enemy) number 1 in this family we nominate the Goutweed, *Aegopodium podagraria*. The celerylike foliage of this species is not unattractive, and both a green and a white-mottled form are widely used as edgings of beds in old-fashioned gardens. With the best of intentions, friends will often present the rock gardening novice with clumps of these. Soon the creeping rootstocks will find their way under every rock, and vigorous shoots will appear in the most unexpected and unwanted places. Pulling these up will only lead to the appearance of more and more, and ultimately the rock garden will have to be completely upheaved and rebuilt.—E.T.W.



OUR ROCK GARDEN AT SEA BREEZE FARM

ELIZABETH GREGORY HILL, Lynnhaven, Va.

IN THE lives of most people there comes a time when there is a yearning and a call to escape from city life and get out in the open, among the fields and woods, and be among nature's very own. Such a place we found at Sea Breeze Farm on the Lynnhaven River, with the Lynnhaven Inlet and Chesapeake Bay in view in front of us. The river, with its branches, makes up through the wooded sections, and forms land-locked coves, where the famed Lynnhaven oysters thrive.

When we first came to Sea Breeze Farm twenty-six years ago, we truly found a place in the wilds. It was at that time a deserted farm, and there were no good highways here through Princess Anne County. Notwithstanding all the discomforts, native beauty was around us everywhere, to our delight,—for here we had native flora and trees, birds of all kinds, sea and land fowl.

As time went on, and Sea Breeze Farm became a second home and habitable, our various gardens sprang up here and there. At one point, a wooded section, sloping down to the river edge, with a cove to one side, it seemed the very place for a rock and wild garden. For although coastal Virginia is a flat country, we really can boast of a few banks and hill slopes.

Well, the scenery was there,—then the problem arose, with sand on every side,—where to get the rocks? It happened this way: One day near our old home in Portsmouth, Virginia, we passed an old stone building being torn down, and asked what they were going to do with the stones. We were told anybody could have them for the hauling. It did not take us long to arrange with a truck driver, and in a few hours the truck was on the ferry-boat to Norfolk, en route twenty miles on the Virginia Beach Boulevard, turning into the Little Neck Road, to its destination, Sea Breeze Farm. This truck paid us many visits, each time bringing more stone. Then came the question how to use the pieces of stone.

On the place there were growing many native evergreen trees,—live-oaks, hollies, yaupons, cedars, pines, myrtles, etc., along with the deciduous oaks, dogwood, persimmon, tulip-poplar, walnut, sassafras, and stewartia. We decided to make rock steps for paths and trails, winding up and down the sloping banks, with smaller rocks and pebbles forming borders along the paths. The routes were chosen so that there would be views of the Lynnhaven river from the several high points among the trees.

Here, as well as in our other gardens, we have found many halfhardy exotic shrubs grow beautifully,—azaleas, camellias, Nandina, and Cleypora (*Eurya*); an especially lovely accent is furnished by *Mahonia bealei* with richly colored holly-like leaves and conspicuous berries. We have tried a form of tea (*Thea sinensis*) and find that it is not injured by high tides.

In the rock garden proper we have succeeded in growing not only species which occur naturally at sea level, but also such high altitude plants as: *Dodecatheon meadia*; *Cypripedium reginae*; *Gentiana andrewsii*; *Iris cristata*; *Shortia galacifolia*; *Saxifraga michauxii*; *Trillium grandiflorum* and others.

Our rock garden is a place where we can steal away and experiment, without interruption, on many a small plant, in the hope that it may take kindly to our introduced rocks. Some day we are even hoping to have a rock wall at the entrance. Nothing venture, nothing have. This flat-country rock garden gives joy and delight to every member of the family who has had a hand in its success.

A MESSAGE FROM OVERSEAS

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: You have asked me, an unknown stranger to your land, to write a note for your Bulletin, telling you something of the conditions here in this war-weary old country. But you have kindly given me a free hand, so I ramble.

I do not claim to have expert knowledge of alpinists or how best to treat their varied requirements. I grow a few, I love them all. But at the same time, my heart goes out to the great floral world, so beautiful, so varied, that I am deeply interested in everything that grows, and that no doubt is my undoing. Why, only today, I planted some acorns of our grand oak trees, and so neglected to water my *Jankea Heldreichii*, and missed the gold satin goblets of *Oxalis lobata* which opened to a brief spell of winter sun. Still, I confess that the giant of our woods is to me one of Nature's greatest triumphs and gifts which never fails to delight my eyes; but such are a bit big for our alpine houses, or gardens, and must not be a too near neighbour to such sacred haunts, superb as they are.

Your great and wonderful country, so vast, has always seemed a long way off to me, but I have lived to see that broad ocean which divides us, so narrowed in time-distance, that you now seem much nearer neighbours, and as that barrier has lessened, so I trust has the feeling of distance and strangeness, to be replaced by a fellowship of understanding and good will that has a long and extended vision. But those of us who dwell on either side, and have a love for these alpine gems, we plantmen, have a much stronger bond. Though so far apart, yet we seem to know each other, because we have a mind-blending outlook, we are tuned in to the same wave length.

This fellowship of real gardeners has a world-wide grasp. We meet each other for the first time, but in less than ten minutes a friendship has grown, we are offering to each other to exchange our choicest treasures, we are ready and willing to impart any knowledge, to give away our "trade secrets." To tell each other all we know of individual treatment of our loved treasures, to help. There is no dog-in-the-manger spirit in true plant lovers, we pool our knowledge, nay our joy. We want others to grow the plant as well as perchance we may have had the luck to accomplish, we want them to share our pleasure. So as the membership of your Rock Garden Society grows, fed by the resources of your boundless and wonderful country, so will the real ties of friendship be strengthened and developed with us here in the Old Country, surely a deeper understanding must result. The Brotherhood of the lovers of the exquisite alpine flora is international, a world-wide fraternity, that knows not wars.

You have asked me to say something of the effect of this war on our gardens, and alpine treasures. Alas! I fear that it is a sad tale. I am an old man, and can look back on over fifty years of gardening. In all those long years, I have fought a battle, fought with weather, adverse conditions, uncongenial soils, a shortness of time and opportunity, added to these, the endless army of diseases, pests, blights, and weeds that know not death or destruction. But I have enjoyed the campaign, because I have often triumphed, and if beaten, only felt the keener to try again. But now I am beaten outright. No labour, no time, no replacements. In such a calamity, the invading army of weeds, and a shortage of every accessory that one needs, with no opportunity to propagate, save or plant seeds, or raise seedlings or cuttings. I am defeated. War blight!

And that I fear applies to a great many of us, that many valuable collections here have suffered terrible losses, that many treasures are gone, replaceable we hope, but often doubtful, all this is I am afraid but part of the dismal story.

But the lovers and growers of alpines have an advantage. On quite a small plot of ground, we can have an outcrop of rocks, in which an astonishing number of these treasures can find congenial homes, and the upkeep is not a great demand on time. While in the alpine house, an array of pans can be accommodated, and tended in odd hours snatched from the spin of life, and such 'stolen sweets' are a joy and tonic to remember when the hum of business is resumed.

We keen gardeners and plant lovers are a race that is always full of hope and expectation. The clouds are always breaking. Soon the sun will shine through and disperse the darkness which madmen have created.

And an ever-kind Nature is waiting, for she nurses in her lap, and tends the lives of those precious gems, which we have for a time lost. There the jewels of the high altars of the world are in her safe keeping. Shrouded in her filmy mists, basking in her golden sunlight, hidden under her warm mantle of soft snow, sheltered from storms in nook, crevice and cranny—there they are, 'the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills; the precious things of the earth that spring from the deep that croucheth beneath.'

So the eager hopeful enthusiast rising at the crack of dawn, will tramp the lower valleys and climbing the buttress of the towers above, reach the cooler habitat of his quest, before the hot sun exhausts him, and there with joyful hands and loving care, (and, we hope, due restraint) prise from their rocky beds a surplus of the jewels, and so enable us once again to grow, cherish, and worship them as we would wish and of which they are worthy.

And when he has thus attained their sanctuary, an unusual something will take possession of him. For a brief space of time, the commitments of the world will slip into the past, his mind will be uplifted and a serene peace will come. There the face of Nature is in its primitive and pristine beauty, the seemingly uncongenial rugged bosom of the earth will have crystallized into those coloured gems which demand our love, and which are an ever-increasing joy to possess.

For in our eyes nothing can surpass these 'little people of the hills' which distill from the elements of their surroundings, a purity and clarity of colour, a perfection of structure, the quality of refined 'breeding' which combines to form a precious jewelled section of one of the best of the Creator's most perfect works.

"I know a magic mountain
Where lightnings love to play,
Where snow-slides smash the pine woods
And spur man's puny sway.
Yet 'tis there the blue-eyed Gentians,
Safe midst the stately towers,
Are really God's own children
Pretending to be flowers."

WM. BARTRAM

Long may they flower there, and may they flourish and delight us here, and you in another land, that we may remain brothers united in the joys of a common pastime, even if great waters divide us.

Yours with earthy hands,

Colwall, Malvern, England

ERNEST BALLARD

THE AMERICAN ROCK GARDEN SOCIETY SPRING PROGRAM

Annual Luncheon at the Hotel Lexington on Thursday, March 15, 1945. Mrs. J. Norman Henry will lecture on Exploring for Plants in Northern British Columbia, illustrated by motion pictures; you will receive detailed announcement by mail.

Garden Party at Mrs. Sarah A. Hodson's, Rock Ridge, Greenwich, Conn., on Saturday, April 28.

ANNUAL EXHIBIT

to be held at the quarters of the

HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK INC.

598 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Wednesday and Thursday, May 16th and 17th

Preliminary plans have been completed for this Spring Show of the American Rock Garden Society. This joint venture, primarily of members and commercial growers, is not intended as an elaborate display comparable to those magnificent exhibits produced in New York prior to the war. It is frankly planned as a conservation show, in keeping with the times, so that there will be no interference with the war effort. Such an exhibit of plants and miniature rock gardens undoubtedly encourages interest in rock gardening and promotes an acquaintance with newer or rarer plants that are not ordinarily observed, other than through catalogue descriptions.

This first Spring Show is scheduled for the middle of May, which is usually the height of the outdoor blooming season for rock plants, particularly in the Eastern region. Exhibits may consist of alpiners, woodland plants, ferns, bulbs or corms, dwarf conifers, deciduous or evergreen shrubs, or any herbaceous perennial plants adaptable for the rock garden. The exhibits should come within the following three groups:—

CLASS 1—Miniature rock gardens set on tables to cover an area three feet by five feet.

CLASS 2—Any smaller rock trough or tray gardens.

CLASS 3—Specimen plants in pots or trough, or any other display of material of suitable interest.

Various awards or medals will be distributed in each class.

The Show Committee wishes to fully cooperate with members or growers who are desirous of exhibiting either one or a score of plants. If you grow any appropriate plant of merit, please endeavor to enter it in this Show. Additional details will be forthcoming, but if any information should be required in the interim, please communicate direct with:

HAROLD EPSTEIN,
5 Forest Court,
Larchmont, N. Y.

} *Member of the Show Committee in charge of
Exhibits and Publicity.*

Other Members of the Show Committee

Mr. Leonard J. Buck — *In charge of Arrangements*

Dr. H. H. M. Lyle — *In charge of Judging*

Mr. Clarence Lewis — *Chairman of Committee*

Annual meeting in Boston on May 29. Details next month.

Garden Party at Mrs. DeBevoise's Cronamere, Greens Farms, June 2.

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CARROLL GARDENS

Westminster, Maryland

GREEN PASTURE GARDENS

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REX D. PEARCE

Moorestown, New Jersey

CARL STARKER GARDENS

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UPTON GARDENS

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Colorado

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