



**THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY
ULSTER GROUP**



Newsletter No. 10 August 2011



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Editorial

Usually by mid August your newsletter is printed and safely in its envelope but apologies this year. I am afraid your editor has been travelling too much and was not at home to persuade and harass reluctant contributors. But the articles are slowly arriving and sincere thanks to all for their efforts for, as I keep repeating, there would be no newsletter without them. Also I would appeal to anyone with interesting photographs of Ulster Group events or plants to send them to me for possible publication next year as we don't manage to attend everything.

This summer has been a busy time for me with tours, both home and abroad, home being the excellent tour to Wexford, organised by Kay and Margaret, and abroad being Yunnan in China. While nothing can compare with seeing plants growing in their native habitat, I now appreciate how lucky we are in Ireland to be able both to see and grow them in the comfort of home. Many of the plants we saw in Wexford, especially the primulas, we were to see again in the wild in China but without the ease of an Ulsterbus coach driven on tarmac roads. The scenery in the Tibetan marches is indeed awesome and the efforts of the planthunters, both past and present, has risen considerably in my estimation.

It was lovely to meet up with Lynas Cardy out on a garden visit this summer and also to hear that Joe Kennedy is making a good recovery after a recent illness. I know some of our older members are no longer able to get to meetings so often but I hope the Newsletter keeps you in touch and we send our best wishes to all who have been ill.

The end of this week sees our August Picnic which Margaret Glynn kindly offered to host, in spite of having to cope with knee surgery among other problems. I know most members enjoy the social 'get togethers' and having missed the May Garden visit, I am looking forward to seeing everyone. A friend once said that gardening was a very lonely occupation - not if you join the AGS where advice and friendship come free!

The 8th International Rock Garden Plant Conference

The April Conference in Nottingham saw 11 members from Ireland - Heather Smith, Liam and myself from the North - both attending and taking part in an excellent meeting - Martin Walsh being a guest lecturer, George Sevastopulo using his skills as auctioneer, and Liam chairing a meeting. While some of the lectures were about places and plants many of us will never see, there were practical workshops covering a wide range of subjects making the choice of which to attend difficult.



It was great to see so many younger delegates there from all over the world and we were pleased to hear it announced that the Ulster Group committee had sponsored one student. They all showed great enthusiasm and it was a wonderful opportunity for all of us, young and old, to meet the people behind the names we read in the bulletins and books.

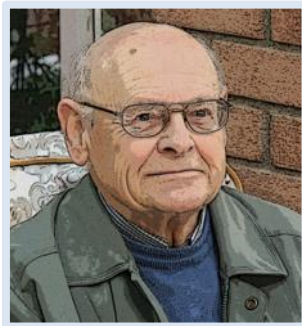
Obituaries

This past year saw the departure of four members of the Ulster Group, Jim Price, Bob Kennedy, Victor Bridges and Clive Carr.

Jim Price - 9th July 1924 - 26th December 2010; Vice President Ulster Group

Jim died peacefully in the early hours of Boxing Day in hospital. The Ulster Alpine Group was his passion and plantsman, as he was, he shared his special plants and knowledge with interested members. His obvious increasing physical frailty often made him impatient but, sharp as ever mentally, he talked about his hobby to the last with enthusiasm. He had an ideal life - enjoyed his career as bank manager, had a devoted family and supportive friends. For all of those whose lives he touched, he shall be missed.

Margaret Glynn



Robert (Bob) Kennedy I first met Bob 25 years ago on an alpine holiday and he remained that quiet friendly gentleman, whether sharing his beautiful Holywood garden with AGS members or giving his support to Lorna at the show plant stall.

Victor Bridges was also a long time member of the Ulster Group and, like Bob, was always there in a quiet supportive role with Joy.

Clive Carr was a more recent member whose sudden death sadly deprived the group of an active member who was just getting to know all our ways.

We have lost 4 very good members and extend our sincere sympathy to their families and friends.

Narcissus minimus: A lasting legacy from the Daisy Hill Nursery.

Gary Dunlop



It is over a century since the Daisy Hill Nursery introduced this delightful dwarf daffodil into cultivation, which surprisingly Charles Nelson omits from the list of plants in his excellent book about the nursery, as he concentrated on cultivars originating at the nursery.¹ Listing the number of species that the Daisy Hill Nursery introduced into cultivation in the British Isles would have made the book considerably larger. Of the few post war Daisy Hill catalogues that I have or have photocopies of, the last one to list *N.minimus* is No 148 from 1955, which describes it as “ The smallest of all the yellow trumpet daffodils:3-4 inches tall”.² It has survived in cultivation in Northern Ireland and beyond for generations and is one of the memorable plants that Peter McCann, the last manager of the nursery, who joined it in 1945 at the age of 14, mentions in his brief memoir of his life at the nursery.³

In the open ground this daffodil is a little larger than the catalogue description suggests. The flower often opens just above ground level, and the stem elongates to almost 6 inches (150mm) and the leaves also elongate even after the flowers have faded reaching about 8 inches (200mm). In a trough, or in dry or relatively starved conditions, the plant is as small as the catalogue description, a perfect miniature trumpet daffodil, which clumps up readily.

I first came across this little daffodil in the early 1970s, in the garden at Plas Merdyn in Holywood, Co Down, of my gardening mentors, the late Drs Bill & Gretta Lennon, who were leading figures in horticulture and the local Alpine Garden Society. Bill Lennon had obtained it from Daisy Hill Nursery as *N.minimus* along with a rather larger one named *N.nanus*. Their garden is no more, as unfortunately it was stripped of nearly all the worthwhile, choice and rare plants they used to grow, by the subsequent owners. The garden was well past its prime by the time I got to know the Lennons, and for many years I helped them to maintain their 3-acre woodland garden in reasonable order, by doing some of the heavier clearance work, of brambles etc, which they could no longer manage. When the Lennons finally decided to give up their garden in the late 1980s, they allowed me to rescue bits of various plants and I also organised both Nigel Marshall, the head gardener of Mount Stewart and Mike Snowden, his counterpoint at Rowallane to rescue plants as well. What was rescued was negligible as most of the rhododendrons and other shrubs were far too large to move.

One of the plants I rescued was a small clump of *N. minimus*, as well as a few bulbs of some of the other daffodils they grew, which the Lennons had mostly obtained cheaply as breeder's rejects; despite their origin they were quite attractive, but presumably not distinct enough to be worth naming. I have no particular interest in daffodils, apart from providing some bright early spring colour and a liking for bright yellow flowers, and thus have no specific knowledge of the species or cultivars. Over the years I have given many other people some bulbs of *N.minimus* particularly in England where I understood it to be almost unknown. I also sought advice as to what the proper identity was, as *N.minimus* did not seem to be a valid species name. *N. asturiensis* was an early suggestion but others more confidently determined that it was *N.minor*, though I can't remember who all expressed opinions and had no way of assessing their expertise, though it clearly exceeded mine.

About 15 years or more ago Capt. Peter Erskine visited my garden when the little narcissus was in flower and recognised it as the one that he remembered from childhood, as growing in his grandmother's garden, in Holywood, Co.Down, adding that he had never seen it in England. It was common in good gardens in Ulster, at least in those of members of the Alpine Garden Society, so I decided to provisionally call it *N.minor* 'Ulster Form' for want of a better name.

An early recipient of the bulbs from me was Alan Street of Avon Bulbs who thought it was the same as *N.*'Midget'. However, it is classed in the Plant Finder and identified on Daffodil Register as a cultivar of *N. nanus*. Another recipient, rather more than 10 years ago, was the late Kath Dryden, who subsequently told me it was the same as one she grew under the name *N. minor* 'Douglasbank', a name which meant little to me at the time. Some time after that and more than 10 years ago, I was visiting the garden of friends in Scotland, James and his son Jamie Taggart, at the Linn, Cove by Helensburgh. I noticed that they were also growing the dwarf daffodil, which James Taggart told me his grandmother had obtained as *N.minimus* from Daisy Hill Nursery in the 1930's, and they had been growing it ever since. I happened to mention the other name that Kath Dryden had for the bulb, and James was able to explain the background to that. He had given bulbs of *N.minimus* many years before to the late Willie Buchanan, whose garden was called Douglasbank.

Sometime later, about the millennium I was researching early crocosmia cultivars, and working through various early nursery catalogues on periodic visits to the Lindley Library. One of the firms I checked the early catalogues of, was the Daisy Hill Nursery. It had raised and named a couple of crocosmia cultivars, as well as being the only nursery to list *C.*'Vulcan' a distinct form of *Crococsmia x crocosmioides (aurea x paniculata)* raised by Max Leichtlin. In one of these early catalogues, circa 1900 I also came across the listing of *N.minimus*, so I concluded that it was very likely that the bulb was first introduced into cultivation by the Daisy Hill Nursery. When researching this article I checked the Plant Finder which equates *N.minimus* with *N. asturiensis* but this apparently relates to a plant under the name *N.minimus* collected by Peter Barr of the late famous late 19thC bulb nursery. ⁴ In this context it is apparently referred to *N.minimus* hort.,

A year or more ago, I happened to do a search on Google with an approximate or partial name for a very early flowering large narcissus, which I grow. It turned up the website for the American Daffodil Society, which had detailed lists of

cultivars. I found the one I was searching for, but out of curiosity investigated the site further, and was surprised to find that *N.minor* ‘Douglasbank’ was a registered cultivar raised by Willie Buchanan.

That prompted me to contact Sally Kington, who had recently retired as Registrar of Narcissus, and provided her with the background information of *N.minimus* and how Willie Buchanan had obtained it. She confirmed that the International Daffodil Register listed the cultivar ‘Douglasbank’ as a selected seedling of *N.minor* named by Willie Buchanan.

However, it would seem to be identical to its parent, which should not be surprising, but does raise the question as if it was worth naming and whether it should have been registered.

Recently I phoned Capt. Peter Erskine, to belatedly give him the background information on the dwarf narcissus, which he remembered from his youth, and the spurious name and provenance that it has acquired. He was able to tell me that *N.minor* ‘Douglasbank’, had been put up for assessment by the Joint Rock Committee, and when he saw it, he suggested that it was the same plant that he had seen in Holywood decades before and was common in Ulster gardens. This was apparently dismissed by the contingent of members of the Scottish Rock Society on the Joint Rock Committee. He was also able to tell me of a second possible source from which Willie Buchanan could have obtained the plant. His aunt, who had lived with his grandmother, and was a keen gardener had subsequently moved to Bearsden in Glasgow to a house and garden only a couple of hundred yards from Willie Buchanan, and she knew him well and exchanged plants with him.

On checking the indices for the RHS Journal I found reference to another cultivar, *N.minor* ‘Cedric Morris’ which Beth Chatto named after her gardening mentor,

and provided the background details of its origin and introduction, as well as illustrating the plant with a photograph.⁵ The origins confirm it was a separate introduction from the wild, and the flowers in the photograph appear to be rather taller than *N.minor* and seem to differ in appearance to the Daisy Hill introduction. The Plant Finder only lists the plant under a cultivar name, which suggests that the original speculation about it being a natural hybrid might be correct.

The current Plant Finder also list two other entries under *N.minor*, one being simply the species itself and the other the cultivar *N.minor* ‘Little Gem’, which is also registered. There is a slight difference in the description of ‘Douglasbank’ and ‘Little Gem’, the former having a slightly pale yellow perianth, the latter being described as rich yellow. A photograph, on one nursery website, of *N.minor* ‘Little Gem’ suggests that it also has broader perianth segments and a larger corolla than *N.minor* ‘Douglasbank’. Whether the bulbs being sold as simply the species without a cultivar name are different, or perhaps one of the cultivars without its name, is anyone’s guess.

Thus the plant introduced by Daisy Hill as *N. minimus* has been recognized as a form of *N. minor*. It is probably therefore *minimus* of Haworth, treated by the Daffodil Register as *N. minor* var. *minimus*. Several other forms of *N. minor* have been selected for registration as cultivars.

It is not uncommon for a plant to acquire several different names, as it gets passed around by gardeners, and its origins and original name forgotten. Chance can often intervene and original name and background of a plant re-associated with it. It is likely there are many other plants that originated from Daisy Hill Nursery, that have lost their provenance and even their original name.

Acknowledgements.

I would like to thank all those mentioned above from whom I was able to piece together at least some of the history of this attractive little daffodil, and especially Sally Kington for her invaluable assistance.

References:

- 1 Nelson, C. 1998: Daisy Hill Nursery. Northern Ireland Plant Heritage Committee, Belfast
- 2 Daisy Hill 1955: General Catalogue No.148 p98
- 3 McCann, P 2005: The life of a Plantsman: The last days of Daisy Hill. Privately published and sold to raise fund for the Newry & Mourne Romanian Appeal Fund.
- 4 Pugsley, H.W. 1933: Monograph of Narcissus, sub genus Ajax. RHSJ Vol 58 pt 1 pp17-93
- 5 Chatto, B. 1980: Narcissus minor ‘Cedric Morris’. RHS J Vol 105 pp254-5

Ed. Many thanks to Gary who sent me this article in September last year. It has since been published in the January Irish Garden Plant Society's Newsletter but as there is little overlap I thought our members would also find it interesting.

A visit to Lebanon was quite exciting in contemplation and, as it turned out, very interesting. Lebanon is a small country where there is much cultivation and electricity is extended to the remotest villages many of whose buildings have satellite dishes for TV. This means wires everywhere. The two most visible languages are English and French. Lebanon consists of four 'strips' moving



eastwards and running north/south: Coastal region, Lebanon Mountains, Bekaa Valley and Anti-Lebanon Mountains.

Flying in from Istanbul after dark, the aerial view of Beirut was of a bustling, brightly lit city. Our group was in two minibuses, containing 11 of us, Ian Green (our leader) and two Lebanese drivers, took us to Jezzine in the southern

tip of the Lebanon Mountains. Our first hotel, up in the hills' was called L'Etoile du Loup, and our rooms lovely small detached complete cottages. After breakfast next morning, we drove out from the hotel for the first plant-hunting trip of the holiday. Immediately obvious was *Ranunculus asiaticus*, a bright red anemone looking beautiful among the rocks. This was almost as common as yellow buttercups and In the limestone rocks orchids were dotted about: *Orchis italica*, *O. papilionaceae*, *Ophrys bornmuelleri*, *Serapias levantina*, *O. umbilicata* and more were to be found.



Ophrys bornmuelleri

Arum palaestinum was found everywhere but not



Serapias levantina

common. There was one sorry-looking *Tulipa aleppensis* nearly over. We also saw a tortoise (saw many of these).

We returned to the hotel for lunch. In the Lebanon, there is always too much delicious food on the table and the hosts would be horrified if you could finish it all. We must, therefore, have made them very happy.

We went to El Kheibe in the afternoon to continue the search for plants. The pink *Linum pubescens* was fairly common but *Cyclamen cilicium* rather less so. This is a small variable plant with white to pink flowers and beautiful foliage, running

amongst the rocks. We were just in time to see *Fritillaria persica lebanica* with near white flowers.

We left this great hotel the next morning and, taking a packed lunch, we visited Keffraiya and Faraya. We had intended to go south, across a pass down into the Bekaa Valley and drive north but couldn't do this so had to cross by another pass entering the valley further north.



Cyclamen cilicium

The first stop was a dry slope for a search by the roadside and beyond. Here were to be seen *Fritillaria hermonis* and the variable *Anemone blanda* with *Muscari comosum*. *Rheum ribes* was a surprise find after a steep climb..



Aubrieta libanotica

The second place was up in the pass high enough for there to be snow patches and had only just been opened as there was a late season. Here were *Puschkinia scilloides*, *Ornithogalum platyphyllum* , *Gagea reticulata*, *G. dubia* ,*G. fistulosa* and *Corydalis*. *Corydalis rutifolia* was

the most frequently seen though *C. tarnacola* was also seen.

At the last site of the day, in search of the *Oncocylus Iris cedretii* , the area had changed - it was partly newly built over but we found the iris, frustratingly only in bud.

So, on to the second hotel. After a long drive ending in darkness we reached Aarab el Laqlouq, also in the Lebanon Mountains, north of Beirut having gone through the city. We were especially looking for the iris and it proved hard to find.



Onosma fruticans

In the Bekaa Valley one could see how fertile it is but we were interested in the hills. On the western side of the Mountains of Lebanon we visited a forest of the famous Cedar of Lebanon at Bcharre and found there hundreds of *Fritillaria hermonis*.



Iris cedretii

On this last day in Lebanon there were several stops. Along with eight species of *Gagea* and five species of *Ornithogalum* were *Tulipa agenensis*, the lovely *Bellevalia hermonis* and the blue (and occasionally white) *Aubretia libanotica*, mostly on shady rocks.

There were many *Vicia* and colourful *Lathyrus* species.

Finally, on the last visit of the last day, following information from locals, we found, a few miles from the hotel, the Iris we were most looking for – *Iris cedretii*. We had virtually given up hope! Along with the iris were *Onosma auchariana* and *Verbascum libanoticum* to finish off a good trip.

There is so much to see that Ian Green (Green Tours) says Lebanon deserves its own tour. We left Lebanon with quite the earliest start I've ever had – leaving the hotel at midnight!

Trip to the Deep South June 2011 - Nancy Derby

It was with great enthusiasm that the members of the Ulster Alpine Garden Society met at 7.30 am in the Europa Bus Centre, Belfast. Wallets must have been full as many crates and labelled bags were packed away , awaiting the exciting plants to be bought.

We first went to **Karl Flynn's** garden in **Howth**, a sloping garden built over ten years, with initially about 4 inches of soil over rock - many interesting plants and a Japanese garden. A special thanks goes to his wife Marcella, who, after our early start, resuscitated us all with coffee - not easy with over 40 people.



Reluctantly we had to leave to visit **Carmel Duignan** in **Shankill, South Dublin**, but soon were enchanted by her garden, packed full of wonderful plants, whatever the season - architectural plants, exciting shrubs and roses with clematis sprawling through them. Among these treasures we ate our packed lunches and again were provided with coffee and cakes. We were sad to leave but had to travel to Whites Hotel in Wexford, our centre for the trip, so we moved on.

Once again Dirk was our driver and, as usual, did an excellent job of negotiating the narrow streets of Wexford. Finally all were settled in their rooms for the next four nights and able to relax over an enjoyable evening meal.



Wednesday saw us off at 9am for the **Bay Garden, Camolin** in **Enniscorthy**, owned by **Iain and Frances MacDonald**, both Kew trained gardeners. They have created many garden rooms around the Georgian house. We wandered happily through them all, and took delight especially in the woodland garden, where choice trees and shrubs led down to a bog garden, filled with candelabra primulas, orchids and irises, surrounding a little summerhouse. This was a garden to inspire with both planting and design.

After lunch at the Ballycarney Inn, we continued on to **Tombrick Garden, Ballycarney**, owned by **Walter Kelly**. He has used some of his farmland to create different areas, fed by a stream widening out at times to large ponds and providing habitats for many rare breeds of ducks and fowl as well as choice and colourful shrubs. But perhaps the rockery along the back and far side of the house gave most pleasure to alpine gardeners.



Time for one more visit before heading back to the hotel and **Coolaught Gardens and Garden Centre, Clonroche** provided plenty of temptation with both delicious afternoon tea and an excellent nursery. We saw the front of the old farmhouse, where in springtime old species of narcissi grow and the lawn is a mass of crocuses. Here many plants were bought as they have a wide range of unusual shrubs, trees and ferns - well worth a trip.



Thursday and we were off to **Fairbrook House Gardens, Kilmeaden** where the owner, **Clary Mastenbroek**, took us on a guided tour. Twenty years ago Clary and her late husband, from the Netherlands, bought the old ruined woollen mill and began clearing brambles etc. to create a garden. After her husband's untimely death 10 years ago, she decided to carry on and has created an enchanting artist's garden, using old ruined walls to create many garden rooms and has also opened a gallery of contemporary art. This has been a marathon task but has preserved a part of local history including, across the road, a woodland walk by the river and the massive brick wall surrounding the mill pond.



Following lunch at the Holy Cross Inn, we arrived at **Mount Congreve** where regrettably the owner, **Ambrose Congreve**, had died only 5 days before at the age of 104.

While this curtailed our visit we found much to see in the walled garden, especially the long beds of paeonies - so many varieties all in full flower interspersed with nepeta - a sight to behold! On through to the water lily pond and a further walled garden, with one wall covered by a long white wisteria while the north was clothed by *Hvdrangea petiolaris*, again spectacular.





Friday morning saw us at the famous *Altamont Gardens* in *Tullow*, so beautifully developed by the late Corona North, where most of us walked round the lake, filled with water lilies, and enjoyed the peace and quiet. Many photos were taken of the house across the lake, the roses, and the peacock and chicks before a visit to the adjoining plant sales. I haven't mentioned much about the buying of plants, but after lunch at the Forge Inn and an early return to the hotel, Dirk said 'NO MORE PLANTS'. As well as an expert driver he is definitely an expert packer!



There was time to explore the historic town of Wexford and the last evening was spent, as with previous evenings, with pleasant company and the odd glass of wine.





After settling up next morning, we drove through wonderful countryside to **Warble Bank, Newtownmountkennedy**, a crowded cottage garden with a wide range of plants and vegetables where yet again the charming owner served us coffee, cake and shared her plants. Again the sun shone as it had nearly every day.

Lunch was at the **Orchard Garden Centre, Celbridge**, where yet again all you could see were trolleys laden with plants. Dirk was ignored but at least they were packed at people's feet, the back aisle, and of course the toilet got several trees.

A really wonderful trip, one of the best ever! Many congratulations to Kay and Margaret for their meticulous organisation and thanks for the time spent researching all the gardens for our enjoyment.



Seduced by Salvias (Kay's Favourite Plants) Kay Dunlop

Sage and onion stuffing, bitter tasting, made with dried, powdery sage - how I hated it! Was this my introduction to the genus *Salvia*?

Salvia : "*Known to cure, to mend, to ease*
 Companion to cooks, splendid teas"

Salvia officinalis - sage - is one of the great herbs, both aromatic and pungent, used as a culinary herb as it is good with fatty meats and poultry, but rather a prima donna, liking to have the stage to itself!

Medicinally, sage was revered as long ago as 1400 BC with the belief that it prolonged life, and was valued as a mental stimulant, indeed it is presently being investigated for its use in mild Alzheimer's. Its benefits are still recognised today, being used as a gargle for sore throats, an aid to digestion and a mouth wash. Should you run out of toothpaste, a sage leaf rubbed over teeth will cleanse and whiten!

Salvia officinalis has some good cultivars in *purpurascens*, *icterina*, gold & green and *tricolor*. All are effective in leaf, hardy to -10°C, like well drained soil and are propagated by seed or cuttings.

Salvia is a genus of approaching 1000 species in the Lamiaceae family, being closely related to other scented herbs such as mint, lavender, marjoram etc. Over half of the species are found in the Americas, the rest mostly from temperate and sub-tropical areas of the world (plus a few from higher altitudes. Ed.)



I think *Salvia* 'Kew Red' and *S. 'Helen's Good Red'* started me on the search for salvias when I bought them some years ago. Both are microphylla (small leaved) cultivars which, with *S. greggii*, are very good garden plants. Brightly coloured flowers varying from pinks through to reds, with pungent smelling leaves, bloom from May through to late Autumn. They are half hardy to -8°C and, like most

salvias, plant in a sunny position, in light well drained soil and propagate by cuttings.

The 'Hardys' I shall pass by - lack of space - but some are very impressive. *S. pratensis*, *sylvestris* and *nemorosa*, especially *S. nemorosa caradonna*, all make good border plants and are attractive to butterflies.

The tender salvias are a challenge. I admire many of them but I do have my absolute favourites!

Salvia patens - flowers are large in various blues but deep royal blue to me is best.

Salvias 'Phyllis Fancy', 'Indigo Spires', 'Mystic Spires', 'Leucantha', 'Confertiflora' and 'Fulgens' - all are beautiful and impressive. Many of these are difficult to over winter and cuttings should be taken in mid summer and cared for until the following Spring. It is worth the effort. Do try some!

Ed. As Kay had no photos I have illustrated her article with pictures of some *alpine* salvias. At present I have 2 plants of *Salvia canescens* which I grew from seed, sent as extra by Votjeh Holubec, collected in Russia and sown in 2008. It has soft, silvery grey leaves and clear blue flowers but, while hardy, I do keep it under glass as it does not like wet. We also saw two salvias growing at over 11,000 feet in China this year - *S. digitaloides* (originally collected by George Forrest) and *S. subpalatinensis*. While beautiful plants I am sure they are well nigh impossible to find here but, perhaps in the future, seed will be available and Kay will have more treasures for her collection.



Salvia supalatinensis



Salvia digitaloides

I've been suffering from Tulipmania for many years and have always been attracted to the smaller species and their cultivars that are suitable for rockeries and troughs. In late summer garden centre shelves are filled with suitable small growing tulips. The choice is getting better every year. Mail order offers a wider range of bulbs. The best in Europe are

Janis Ruksans

Bulb Nursery Rozula LV-4150 Cesu distr. LATVIA % Euro gets a catalogue

Leonid Bondarenko <http://www.litbulbgarden.com/home.php>

Eugenijus Dambrauskas <http://www.augisbulbs.com/>

Don't believe that tulips are throw away and last only one season. This only makes more money for suppliers. I have never thrown away tulip. Also don't believe that saving tulips until January before planting them makes a better plant. The longer a bulb is out of the ground the more dehydrated and stressed it gets. When planted moulds can very quickly destroy the bulbs.

Buy your bulbs as soon as you see them and try to plant them within a few days. I don't give mine any special treatment other than to add some bone meal at the bottom of the planting hole. The beds I grow my tulips in are very different. One has a clay soil and the other is very light and humus rich. Those in troughs are in a gritty mix.

Last year I decided to buy some of the March flowering tulips. It's a bit confusing to see tulip buds appearing at the end of February and to have pots of colour by March 10th.

I have grouped the tulips in my garden in three groups according to where they look best – troughs, rockery and beds

Troughs

hjkhhkhk What about a tulip that flowers during snowdrop time and continues in to April? **Tulipa neustruevae** has the longest flowering period of any tulip that I grow. It's very short with flowers that reach about 2 inches 5 cm high. The outer three petals are backed with green with a hint of pink. The inside is bright yellow.



Tulipa neustruevae

In troughs you don't want tulips that will get too high. **T. aucheriana** is the shortest I grow and it's grown in one trough with a few in troughs around it to make it look like they are seeding. It grows to a height of about 2 inches 5 cm. Their colour is dark dirty pink with a paler ring towards the centre. Their flower buds are at soil level just now but they are at their best in late April.



T. aucheriana



T. sogdiana

T. iliensis is another dainty tulip that flowers, for me, in March. The outside is peach with a hint of green. The three inners are bright yellow. The height is also around 8 inches 20cm. This may sound tall but the three tulips above are very dainty. They are also very suitable for rockery and pot culture.



T. iliensis

Rockery

On the rockery I grow some of the special **T. clusiana** cultivars like Sheila, Honky Tonk and Tubergens Gem. These tulips get the most oos and ahhs and queries from people passing by. Although they can reach 30cm 12 inches their flowers are carried on slender stems. The flowers are tall and slim also. You would hardly notice the leaves if they are coming up through Narcissus and Galanthus. En masse they look fantastic especially if the cultivars are grown in



T.clusiana 'Honky tonk'

blocks. They seed freely so if you want the cultivars to remain pure remove the seed heads before they shed their seeds. The easiest to get hold of are Lady Jane, Tinka and Honky Tonk. Lady Jane is a deep pinky red on the outside and white inside. Tinka is pale clean red on the outer three petals with clean pale yellow inside. Honky Tonk is the shortest *T. clusiana*. It is almost pure yellow but the outer three have a tinge of peach.



T. clusiana 'Tinka'



T. 'Lady Jane'

In pots for now but will go in to the raised beds when dormant are the, new to me, large flowered March flowering selections of species tulips. They are around 16 inches 40cm tall. The outsides are richly coloured but when they

open you'll be running for the camera like I did.

Tulipa kaufmanniana Johan Sebastian Bach changes colour from creamy white to glistening pink on the inside
I'll not describe them and let the photos do the talking



T. kaufmanniana 'JS Bach'



T. kaufmanniana 'Voshod solcna'

Information and Programme

Venue St.Bride's Hall, Derryvolgie Avenue, Belfast - 2.30 p.m.

Dues - Local current subscription rates are £9.00 single, £14.00 family, due at the A.G.M. or before the end of the current year. To help our **treasurer**, **please put your subscription into the envelope provided with your name, title, address, postal code, telephone number and email (if wished), also add "A.G.S." if you are a member of the parent body, all clearly written on the outside or on a slip of paper. Give or post this to Mrs. Margaret Glynn, Hon. Treasurer.** A limit of one year's grace is given.

This subscription is for the local Group only and subscriptions to The Alpine Garden Society must be sent direct.

An Appeal to ALL members to help and volunteer for all the many little tasks that ensure meetings run smoothly and the group stays viable - plant stalls, teas, show duty etc.

It is also a good way for newer members to get to know everyone and is much appreciated - and a BIG Thank you to all the stalwarts who have kept things running so far.

Shows - Your support is really needed at Show time as this is an opportunity to introduce the AGS to the public and share the pleasure that growing alpines can bring.



Ulster Group Webpage and E-mail communication

The webpage, www.alpinegarden-ulster.org.uk is an important avenue of communication to members, and a way of advertising ourselves more widely, especially to potential new members. There is a new 'Plant of the Month' every month, contributed by members, and the webmaster is always in need of new contributions, so please think of a favourite, in the garden or in the wild, and get out your camera and pencil (or keyboard). An archive of show pictures and information from events is building up, there are links to interesting websites, and you can also download past issues of this newsletter.

The webpage is useful in posting information such as date and venue of shows and also updates about changes in the programme. The Hon. Secretary would like to be able to email members about events within the Group, especially notification of illnesses etc. which we would not necessarily wish to place in a public forum such as the website. He would therefore be grateful if members who use email would let him know their email address, so that he can compile an address book. The simplest way to do this is to send an email to him (email address is on your hardcopy of this Newsletter) - including your name !





Programme 2011-2012

2011

September 17th Ulster Group A.G.M.; Members Plant Sale.

Val Keegan, Bray, Co Wicklow. Ireland

"Plants I Love"

October 15th

Dr. Mollie Sanderson Memorial Lecture

Peter Korn, Sweden

"Rock Garden Design and Growing in Sand"

November 12th **Richard Horswood**, Honiton, Devon.

"European Mountain Flowers of Rocks and Screes"

November 18th-20th **Termonfeckin Weekend – Dublin Group**

December 10th Christmas Fayre.

Deborah Bagley, Kilmallock, Co Limerick.

"From Muck to Magic"

2012

January 21st **Chris Birchall**, Cullompton, Devon.

"Choice Plants of Rosemoor"

February 4th **Liam & Joan McCaughey**, Ballinderry, Co Antrim

"Yunnan - In the Tibetan Marches"

February 18th **Snowdrop Day**

March 10th **Members' Show**; "Images from our Wexford Trip June 2011"

March 31st **AGS Ulster Group Show, Greenmount**

April 28th **Dublin Group Show**

Please feel free to bring friends and visitors along to any of our meetings.



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