

International Rock Gardener



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August 2012



The Scottish Rock Garden Club is pleased to support other sister societies however possible and it is with pleasure that we announce the financial support of SRGC to the New Zealand Alpine Garden Society Study Weekend, planned for Christchurch in February 2013 and to the Second Czech International Rock Garden Conference, to be held in May in the fine old town of Tábor, in Southern Bohemia. Later in this IRG you will be able to read more of the arrangements for these two events. First, though, to the plants –with Gene Mirro’s second piece on the lilies of Western North America.

Cover photo: *Oxalis laciniata* var. *pubescens* K. Andersen & L. Hansen (page 16)

---Plant Report---

Liliums of Southern California and the Sierra Nevada Mountains by Gene Mirro

The liliiums of southern California live mainly in the mountains surrounding the Los Angeles area. Much of this area is quite dry and hot, except near the coast where the Pacific Ocean moderates temperature extremes, and in the high mountains, which are much cooler, but still quite dry. Cooler, wetter conditions can be found on the north side of hills, under tree cover, and along streams, many of which are seasonal.

For more information, search the internet by individual species name: [NALS](#) and [PBS](#) are useful sources. For an excellent collection of photos, see the [‘Flowershots’](#) site of Ron Parsons.

Lilium parryi is found to the north, east and south of LA, in shady places along streams, and is rare.



***Lilium parryi* growing near San Jacinto, CA.**

Photo from wikimedia, courtesy of [Jason Hollinger](#).



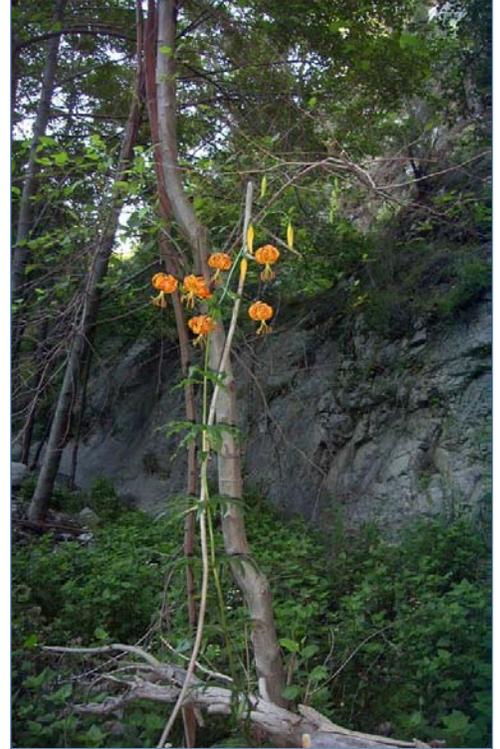
Above: growing next to tomatoes in my garden in S.W. Washington State: so much for exotic habitat requirements!

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Right: *Lilium humboldtii* var. *ocellatum* growing in the [San Gabriel Mountains](#). *Lilium humboldtii* var. *ocellatum* is found in the foothills to the north of Los Angeles.

Lilium humboldtii var. *bloomerianum* is a shorter plant which grows near the coast to the north and south of LA.

Lilium humboldtii 'type' is found at moderate elevations from central to southern California. It is similar to var. *ocellatum*, but with less conspicuous spotting. It can be found in areas with hot summers, in soil that gets very dry by flowering time.



Left: *Lilium humboldtii* growing in a pioneer cemetery east of Sacramento, California.

Right: *Lilium humboldtii* var. *ocellatum* in my garden. The stem to the left had over 50 buds. The tags indicate hand-pollinated flowers.



At higher elevations in the Sierras, *Lilium washingtonianum* grows in sun to part shade.

The form in central California is the type, with white flowers that do not fade to purple.



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Lilium washingtonianum growing by the roadside in Yosemite National Park.

Lilium parvum also grows at high altitudes, around 2300m, in wet areas among grasses and brush. It can be found in a variety of red, orange and pink colours.



Above: ***Lilium parvum*** growing in a marsh in Yosemite National Park, among ***Veratrum***.

Above left: ***Lilium parvum*** and ***Lupinus***, in the [Yosemite National Park](#).

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Yosemite Valley in winter: A Norse god would feel right at home.

Lilium pardalinum and its close relatives can be found growing in cool, moist locations, sometimes even in running water, in the northern Sierras.



Above: *Lilium pardalinum* subsp. *shastense* Photo © Br. Alfred Brousseau, Saint Mary's College.

Right:
Lilium pardalinum subsp. *shastense* in the garden.



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In the Sierras east of Sacramento, a stand of natural hybrids was discovered. The parentage isn't certain; *parvum* and *pardalinum* maybe.



Left: Natural hybrids in habitat

Next month Gene moves on to Washington and Oregon – Ed.

---Rock Gardeners' Gatherings---

'In From The Wild: from the Great Outdoors to our Gardens' at Lincoln University, Christchurch, South Island, New Zealand, 1st to 3rd February 2013



The [New Zealand Alpine Garden Society](#) extends an invitation to their forthcoming Study Weekend.

NZAGS will give a warm welcome to two overseas guest speakers, [Harry Jans](#) from the Netherlands and [Bob Wallis](#) from Wales. Harry is well-known as a world traveller and top-class photographer and will be speaking about his travels and how some of the alpine plants he has seen grow in his garden at just 70ft (21.3m) above sea level! Bob is an expert on bulbous plants, having travelled widely in Europe, Morocco, North America and the Middle East in search of bulbs. He and his wife Rannveig maintain a large garden and extensive bulb collection as well as running their bulb nursery and seed business, so there is much to learn from Bob's wide experience and hands-on practical advice. Bob and Rannveig are also very keen and successful exhibitors.

Other highlights will include a new DVD from [Ian Young](#) in Scotland, talks and workshops from local presenters, a visit to [Broadfields Garden](#) in Christchurch, and the ever-popular specialist plant sales. Finally we hope to round off the weekend with a field trip on the Monday to check out the native flora of the nearby [Craigieburn ski-field](#).

Register your interest now [with Ann Cartman](#) and start planning a New Zealand trip.

The SRGC has many members in New Zealand and contributing some sponsorship to such educational events is one way of helping to promote a wider interest in alpine and rock garden plants.



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SECOND CZECH INTERNATIONAL ROCK GARDEN

CONFERENCE, Tábor, 2nd to 5th May 2013, organised by the [Czech Rock Garden Society](#).



Five years ago our friends in Czechia held their First International Conference in Beroun: for 2013, another has been arranged in [Tábor, the medieval county town of Southern Bohemia](#). The aim of the organisers is to make this Second International Conference even better than the first. For

this event CZRGS offers a diverse programme of superior lectures, interactive workshops and themed evenings designed to give participants plenty of time for intensive networking of all sorts. This conference will take place in the 4-star Hotel Dvořák in the city of Tábor, to take advantage of a 200-seat conference hall at the Hotel Dvořák while also having the opportunity of showcasing the most charming countryside of the Czech Republic. Tábor is 90 kilometres south of Praha (Prague); express trains (Praha Hlavní Nádraží) and buses (Underground Station Praha-Roztyly) serve the city practically every hour on weekdays and the hotel has plenty of parking space for delegates who come by car.

POST-CONFERENCE GARDEN TOUR 5th to 10th May 2013 based in Roztoky. The post-conference tour is designed for a maximum of 120 delegates who will make a circular tour of rock gardens in four coaches with experienced guides. The tours are organized for 5 days and will visit 20 rock gardens (many of them selling alpines, rock garden plants, dwarf shrubs and dwarf conifers/witches brooms) and downtown Prague - with the famous May Rock Garden Show. The first day of the post-conference programme starts from the Hotel Dvořák in Tábor and finishes at the Hotel Academic in Roztoky.

On the website of CZRGS you will find [full details of the events](#) plus links to videos of the town of Tábor and to the hotels used for both the conference and post conference garden tours, based in Roztoky.

Readers of the International Rock Gardener and the journal of the SRGC will be familiar with many of the Speakers invited to address the conference.



ZDENĚK ZVOLÁNEK (CZ), one of the IRG Editorial Team, is a retired architect rock gardening at the Beauty Slope in Czech Karst near Prague and is the current Present of CZRGS.

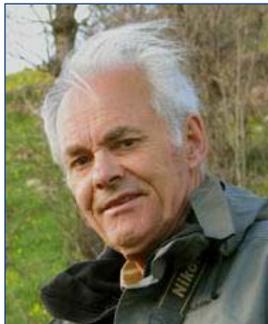
Zdeněk is an internationally recognized lecturer, horticultural writer, Prague Show Arranger and the editor of the Czech Journal, Skalničky. He is known as an evangelist for crevice gardening and constructing large outcrops abroad. He has 30 years of experience as a plant explorer and seed collector in Turkey, in the Balkans and Western North America. His subjects will be: '**American Golden West**' - a song to remember Zdeněk's late partner, Joyce Carruthers and '**Charm of the Balkans**' - in memory of Czech sources of alpines behind the iron curtain and under freedom in the new century.



IAN YOUNG (Scotland) has been interested in wild flowers since he was a young boy and is another member of the IRG Editorial team. Ian is a photographer, artist, and broadcaster who has been actively involved in the Scottish Rock Garden Club for many years, serving on Council since 1988 and was President from 2000 to 2003. He is an SRGC judge and a member of the RHS Rock Garden Plant Committee. For ten years he has written a weekly Bulb Log that appears on the [SRGC website](#). He is a very popular speaker and has lectured widely in the UK as well as USA, Canada, NZ, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium. Ian's subject for the conference will be: '**Small bulbous plants in**

cultivation' (An SRGC sponsored lecture). Ian will also give a bulb propagation workshop. Other workshops will be by Cyril Lafong on alpines in pots and Ota Vlasák and others on troughs.

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DIETER ZSCHUMMEL (Germany) is a retired chemist. For relaxation from his work he started rock gardening 50 years ago. Since 1967 he and his wife Rosi have made their holidays in the mountains every year. In the last 15 years they have been 10 times to China /Tibet. In 2000 they made their first trip to Iran stimulated by the SLIZE expedition and with valuable information given to them by Magnus Liden. Their last and 7th trip to Iran was in 2009. Dieter tries to grow every kind of hardy plant in his garden. Two of his main interests are Androsace and Dionysia.

Dieter will talk on '**Plant exploration in Iran**'.



MICHAL HOPPELE (Poland) is a computer scientist working in banking and a devoted family man. Michal has a plant and photography passion, his main interests are American alpinists and other small plants from all continents. He is interested in rocks and rock garden construction of all kinds including crevice gardens. He runs a [Polish alpine website](#) together with his father. Michal will talk on '**Rock gardening in Poland**', rock garden construction in practice - rocks, crevices, troughs, walls and plants.



VOJTĚCH HOLUBEC (CZ) is a researcher in an agricultural plant gene bank. He has been interested in alpinists and botany since he was 11 years old. He visits mountains several times a year, recently mainly in China. He became obsessed by crevice rock garden construction and has many times headed the organisation of shows. He led the Rock Garden Club of Praha as president for 6 years. Together with his wife Lenka, he is involved in seed and plant propagation. He has written books on rock garden construction and the Caucasus and for the SRGC journal. He also travels internationally to lecture.

His subject will be: '**Chinese flowering Paradise**', the best of the flora of China and Tibet.



PETER KORN (Sweden) is a former horticulturist of Goteborg Botanical Garden, now he runs his own nursery. He has a fine forest property and is making an [excellent natural garden](#) with all kinds of environments, natural outcrops, bogs, and mainly sand and scree slopes. He has success with growing alpinists of all continents. He travels widely to give talks and make gardens. He is another who has written for the SRGC Journal. Peter's talk will be: '**Growing in sand**', rock and scree garden construction near Goteborg.



JIŘÍ PAPOUŠEK (CZ) is a customer care specialist in worldwide express company. He visits European mountains regularly every year, his favourite place is area of Lago di Garda in the Northern Italy. He is enthusiastic grower of cushion plants, dwarf conifers and especially daphnes. Around his house you can find several crevice rock garden constructions, peat blocks and currently he is building an alpine tunnel with a tufa wall. He is also known under his nickname 'the Alpine parrot'. - Jiří will have as his subject '**Czech crevice gardens**', a guide to interesting gardens



MARTIN SHEADER (England) is a marine ecologist /taxonomist at the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton University. He is obsessed with Patagonia and its flora and first visited there in 1997. Since then he and his wife Anna-Liisa have visited the area eleven times. Martin grows and shows alpinists, is an AGS judge and a member of the RHS Rock Garden Plant Committee. Together with a small group of enthusiasts, he is currently writing a photographic guide to the

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mountain flowers of Patagonia which is due for publication in 2013. Martin's subject will be: **'Flowers of the Patagonian Mountains'**, rock plants from South to North along the Patagonian Andes.



VLADIMIR EPIKTETOV (Kazakhstan) is a forestry expert and amateur botanist who began his plant interest with cacti and succulents as a youngster. He is highly respected for his great knowledge of the flora of Kazakhstan and Central Asia and guides visitors to the mountains. In his plant nursery near Almaty his special interest is in conifers, ornamental shrubs and native perennials. A keen photographer, he publishes many [pictures online](#), including in the websites of [Primula World](#) and [Androsace World](#). Vladimir's talk, partly sponsored by SRGC, is **'The top plants from the flora of Kazakhstan and Central Asia'**.



Vladimir Epiktetov on his travels in snow and sunshine! photos Vojtěch Holubec



Should you be wondering what might await at the Czech event, you can find, in the Forum of the SRGC, that there are many reports from the First International Czech Rock Garden Conference in 2007.

In [this post](#) you can find a link to the gardens visited in the post conference tours – we are promised gardens both new and improved for 2013 from those of 2007!

We have one more speaker from the conference line-up to be introduced.

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JAROSLAV KLÍMA (CZ) contributed several articles to 'The Rock Garden' the Journal of the SRGC, in 1979, 1982 and 1983 and many will have grown plants from his seed. At the Conference his subject will be **'Growing of alpiners in the field - from rock gardening to industry'**. ZZ, a long time friend, introduces him more fully:

Our wise old speaker Dr. Jaroslav Klíma is very distinct in the pack of Czech growers, because he does not build stone outcrops but grows thousands of rock garden plants in field culture in slightly acid soil of the cold highland area called Czech Canada. He produces seed for the well-known German Seed Company Jelitto.

In 1970 he lived in Prague and had a rock garden 50km out of town (beside a weekend cabin). He worked for the State Nuclear Research Station as a nuclear chemist and had excellent skills in English. We joined Prague Rock Garden Club and worked together propagating alpiners, making two seed trips to Bulgaria and exchanging seeds and plants with such important people as Jack Drake, Hollett Nursery or Betty Lowry from the State of Washington.

Sadly our partnership ended after golden seven years: our scientist moved to distant Southern Bohemia and I had to learn English to keep up my contacts abroad. He measured radiation there, near the Austria boundary, and bought a big old farm and plenty of fields around a village, Dolní Pěna (which means Lower Froth). There they (Jaroslav and Anna) have their small nursery, handy for people from Austria and they work and smoke hard like Jim Archibald. Alpiners are displayed in many classic granite stone troughs. They sold plants at Prague show and obtained Awards of Merit for plants in extra-long containers. Now, with the terrible prices of fuel, they have stopped coming to our May Prague Show.

Jaroslav will soon be 70 and we will enjoy his enormous experiences in raising plants from seed, keeping the populations in his field happy to obtain a good harvest, when he is one of speakers at our Second International Rock Garden Conference in May 2013, in the medieval town of Tábor.



A colourful field of plants being grown for seed by Jaroslav Klima



The gardens of Vojtěch Holubec and Ota Vlasák- pictures from the 2007 event by Mark Smyth

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Czech Rock Garden Plants and the 2013 Conference

by Zdeněk Zvolánek (president of the Czech Rock Garden Society)



If you are a rock gardener considering a visit to the Second Czech International Rock Garden Conference in Tabor in the Czech Republic, here is a brief and helpful introduction to the collections of plants in our local rock gardens and the plants available to you to buy and take away to your own garden.

The Czech Republic has a continental climate (zones 4-5) so our plants are hardy in many other countries. The southern hemisphere is represented here by practically all the hardier *Oxalis*. Chinese plants such as gentians and androsaces are on trial in some cooler and wetter gardens in troughs in the Czech-Moravian Highlands and are, generally speaking, rarely seen. Lowland Czech and Moravian gardens are fit for growing white wines so are certainly suitable for warmth-loving steppe plants from western North America, southern western Europe, the Balkan peninsula and of course Turkey and Central Asia.

Left: Slate outcrops at the May 2010 Prague show

Below: *Saxifraga x caroli-langii* form



Contemporary Czech rock gardens include vertical courses of sedimentary stones; in these so-called crevice gardens some of the more specialized growers have such difficult plants as *Physoplexis comosa* in cultivation within tufa (a soft travertine rock). Fortunately, we still have sources of cheaper tufa stones from Slovakia and Slovenia. The tufa boulders are placed in troughs or in separate outcrops; some are arranged in walls but more often are placed in an irregular outcrop in the coolest corner of the garden. The bigger the stone, the better! Our conference will include a workshop about crevice gardening with five local

specialists showing how they arrange stones and plants in troughs.

A classic collection in Czechoslovakia was saxifrages of the section *Porophyllum* (now *Porphyron*). There are many Czech cultivars available for sale nowadays and the breeder Karel Lang has a special nursery devoted to the 'Kabschia' saxifrages. The Czechs have the biggest collections of these kinds of saxifrages in the world and are their best modern breeders.

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Right: *Erigeron chrysopsidis* var. *brevifolius* in cultivation.

Some plants are regularly propagated from seeds and in this way some wild plants have established or modified themselves to suit our dry and hot lowland gardens. One such example of this seed selection is *Erigeron chrysopsidis*, an alpine plant from the limestone of Wallawas in northeast Oregon. The Greek *Dianthus haematocalyx* var. *pindicola* self-sows on our southern slopes as do the Croatian *Degenia velebitica* and *Fibigia triquetra*. Czech gardens have a good variety of species from the Balkan genus *Edraianthus* and the Caucasian campanulas.



Our gardens are full of dwarf conifers (preferably witches' broom cultivars) and they are often available to buy. More rarely, there are collections from the genus *Daphne* - and specialist growers propagate them for sale. There are wonderful assortments of dwarf phloxes; people here are crazy for wild micro-phloxes, small eriogonums and all miniature shrubs. Often you will find that rocks are decorated and crevices are stuffed with different species and clones from the genera *Sempervivum* and *Jovibarba*. *Cyclamen* are still rare, although I myself manage to keep many of the hardier species outdoors.



Limestone lovers such as *Gentiana angustifolia*, *G. dinarica* and *G. clusii* often perform much better in Czech gardens than the acid loving *G. acaulis*. *Lewisia cotyledon* is frequently available in many effective colour selections and is always desirable for vertical crevices with eastern exposure. Czech rock gardeners love dwarf ferns and dwarf azaleas (rhododendrons). In many gardens you will find haberleas and ramondas but they are rarely offered for sale. Because of some excellent Czech seed collectors, we have many otherwise unknown Turkish rock garden plants in cultivation. One of our best such introductions is *Aethionema subulatum* from the Dedegol Mountains.

Above: *Gentiana angustifolia*

Below: *Verbascum* x 'Letitia'



Above: *Lewisia cotyledon* at the May 2010 Prague show

Our committee cordially invites all rock gardeners to come to Tábor May 2nd to May 5th in 2013 to share the joy and learning of rock gardens with us.

All information about the conference is available on the internet pages of the [Czech Rock Garden Society](http://www.srgc.net).

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---The Beauty Slope---

Gentiana occidentalis by Zdeněk Zvolánek

This western trumpet gentian that hails from the western Pyrenees of the Cordillera Cantabrica in Spain is the prettier sister of *G. angustifolia*. Some botanists have treated it as a subspecies of *Gentiana angustifolia* using the synonym *G. angustifolia* subsp. *occidentalis*. We believe that it is a species unto itself.

It is a lime-loving (calciphile) subalpine/alpine plant occurring at elevations of 800-3100m that can be found in stony-gravelly ecological zones that favour amongst other things, sunny, short grasses. The classic place of collection is in the Picos de Europa mountain range.



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Gentiana occidentalis

The trumpets can be 7 cm long and they have a minimum of green spots in the throat. The blue of the flowers is bright azure combined with deep violet walls on the outside of the tubular flowers. This plant spreads quickly with its underground stems in my slightly alkaline and mineral-rich soil of the Beauty Slope. This is a most promising habit for propagation. It is not a thirsty character in my rock garden so I do not water it. All it asks for is loamy clay and plenty of sun. This is essential for good flowering. Despite its obvious beauty, it is a tough plant that seems at home in the steppe climate conditions of Central Europe. Due to my tough love diet, its leaves are smaller than many I have seen in other gardens. The plant, however, is obedient to its lazy Bohemian owner and, most

importantly, bone hardy. This approach seems to suit both of us well.

My plant was a gift from the plantsman Rudi Weiss of Waiblingen, in southern Germany.

--- Plant Portrait ---

Oxalis laciniata* var. *pubescens by Kirsten Andersen and Lars Hansen

Flora Patagonica, Parte V from 1988 includes the description of two *Oxalis* species that are very similar: *Oxalis laciniata* and *O. squamoso-radicosa*. In nature it is difficult to tell the difference and in culture, each plant may over the years change form from one to the other species. This led in 2009 to *O. squamoso-radicosa* being reduced to a synonym of *O. laciniata*. (See [J.M.S. Shaw in "Hanburyana" vol 4: September 2009](#) pp19-22).

This fits well with the fact that plants in culture have always been known as *O. laciniata*.



Three forms of *Oxalis laciniata* var. *pubescens* in cultivation

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The position that *O. squamoso-radicosa* var. *pubescens* (described by Carl Skottsberg in 1916) should have was not considered at the same time. Partly as a result of extensive field studies by Chris Brickell, Peter Erskine and Martin Sheader, who have travelled many times in Patagonia, *O. squamoso-radicosa* var. *pubescens* was changed to *O. laciniata* var. *pubescens* in 2011 and its distribution determined. (See J.M.S. Shaw in "Hanburyana" vol. 5: June-2011: '[A new combination in Oxalis laciniata Cav.](#)' pp33-36).



O. laciniata var. *pubescens* on Monte Zeballos

O. laciniata var. *pubescens* is, compared to *O. laciniata*, only found in a relatively narrow range from Estancia Rio Capitan in the south to Monte Zeballos and Picu Sur in the north, an area of approx. 200 x 30km in the northwest corner of the Santa Cruz Province in Argentina and the adjacent area in Chile.

The particular characteristics of *O. laciniata* var. *pubescens* are the hairy, wide leaves. In addition the calyx has long white hairs and the upper part of the flower stalks is pubescent. The petals are blue-violet and shortly hairy along the margins. Finally it is self-compatible which *Oxalis laciniata* is not.



We have travelled several times to Patagonia and have seen *O. laciniata* var. *pubescens* in the [Perito Moreno National Park](#) and on Monte Zeballos. It is very satisfying that the *O. laciniata* we have seen in these areas is now identified as a special variety, because they are easily recognizable and are clearly distinct from

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the normal *O. laciniata*. In our opinion there is greater variation in flower colour in the Perito Moreno area, from bluish white to blue to violet, while the flowers we have seen on Monte Zeballos have all been violet.

We have grown *O. laciniata* var. *pubescens* for about 12 years as *O. laciniata*. It also differs in culture from the other *O. laciniata* (see the pictures page 14) but we have regarded it as an indication of the great variation found within *O. laciniata*. We grow it in plastic pots in an unheated greenhouse and for the last couple of years in a sand bed in the garden where it has not flowered yet. In our experience var. *pubescens* must be treated like the other *O. laciniata*.

We present photographs of some variations of *O. laciniata* var. *pubescens* in the wild in the Perito Moreno National Park.



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All *Oxalis* photos: Kirsten Andersen and Lars Hansen

www.srgc.net