



Wisley's Alpine Log

By Paul Cumbleton

Log 6 ... 11th March 2009



Half way through February I was phoned to ask if the department could help out regarding the early spring AGS show at Harlow; several people had had to pull out and we were asked if we could put on an exhibit of some sort. The notice was obviously short but we said we would do what we could. With little time to prepare anything new, we decided to make use of what we had prepared last year for our 'Hepatica Spectacular' event here at Wisley. It would at least mean that more people got a chance to see a large display of these fashionable plants.

Lucie, who cultivates the *Hepatica* collection here, along with Anita and some of the trainees set to and over several days chose the plants, cleaned up the pots, added fresh topdressing and polished the leaves (yes, really – every one of them!). Meanwhile I got together the information, pictures and other information and items we wanted to display. An early start was required on the morning of the show to get there in time to stage the exhibit. Here are some views of the result:





Notice the beautiful Japanese ceramic plates on the top of this display. These are hand-painted with *Hepatica* designs and pictured more closely here (right and below). Each year there is a major competitive show for *Hepatica* in Japan. A plate of this kind is presented to the winner of the best plant in show category.



Note too on the shelves the similarly hand-painted cups and also the decorative pots. In the same way that we might drop a plant grown in a plastic pot into a nice clay one for a show, they will often drop a plant grown in a plain pot into one of these decorative ones for show purposes.

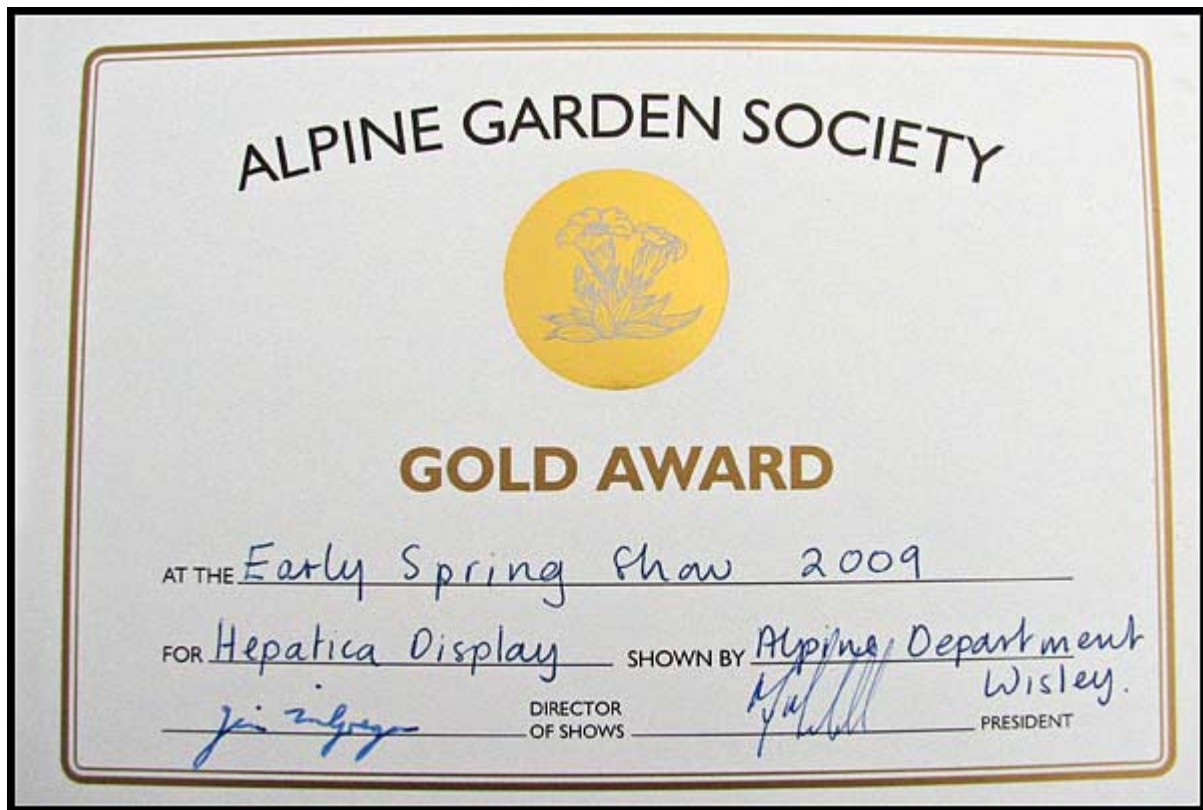
As well as the potted plants, the display had a trough to show good these plants look in such a situation:



We also included some display boards showing lots of pictures of some exceptional Hepatica forms and some information about their cultivation:



Despite this being a fairly hurriedly-prepared exhibit it is surprising just how long it can take to put together an exhibit of this sort – we calculated that we had spent about 20 staff-days on preparing it. However all the work was worth the effort we had put into it – it stimulated a lot of interest, lots of questions and lots of comments. We were then really happy to be given a Gold Award for our efforts!



Back to Wisley now and I wanted to end with some colour and show just a few of so many plants which are now coming into bloom for our visitors to enjoy. *Adonis amurensis* 'Fukujuki' is making a bright splash on our part-shaded terrace:



This is also the time of year that Dionysia are at their best.



We find it hard to cultivate these here in the hot south-east so we don't keep many. This one is a hybrid called 'Corona':

This yellow-flowered one is a *curviflora* x *tapetodes* cross.



Out on one of the sand beds, *Callianthemum kernerianum* has pushed up a lovely, compact

group of its charming daisy flowers:



Lastly, indoors and flowering for the first time with us is *Ophrys sicula*:

