

# International Rock Gardener



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The Scottish Rock Garden Club

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# ----International Rock Gardener----

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Cover photo: Barn in an alpine meadow by Cliff Booker.

At this time of year many of us are heading off on holiday.... travelling to the mountains where we can relax by hiking in beautiful scenery, searching for wild flowers, whether rare or plentiful to photograph them to capture our memories for the future.

Along the way we hope to learn something about the life cycle and needs of the plants which will help us to make them thrive in our gardens.



Cliff Booker and his wife Sue are experienced plant holiday guides who have shared many of their photo memories with the readers of Cliff's articles, such as his ['Land of Coral-Mountains of Dreams' series](#).

Recently returned from his first North American Rock Garden Society Speaker's Tour, Cliff is a real "all-rounder" - giving talks about plants

and places, leading photography workshops and as stalwart founder member of his local [AGS group in East Lancashire](#) and happy exhibitor at the Shows, he still has time for his own mountain travels as well as those tours.



## ----Alpines around the world----



Some emblems of rock garden and alpine garden clubs

[IRG](#) was formed to celebrate the international nature of interest from all around the world in rock garden and alpine plants: above is a selection of emblems from organisations dedicated to the diminutive plant gems of the wild places of the world.

Elsewhere on the SRGC website, [the Forum](#) has proved to be a runaway success in allowing a simple means of interactivity between gardeners, new or experienced, professional or amateur, facilitating the sharing of photos, plants and the engagement in discussions on everything from botany and cultivation to taxonomy and travel. IRG aims to offer intriguing insights into the world of alpine plants and the range and variety of information that is available through the internet.

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There are times, however, when there is nothing as satisfying as a huge meeting, not only of minds but a real coming together of people from many countries - the chance to come to a wonderful international conference, to meet fellow enthusiasts and learn in a friendly group. There have, so far, been seven such conferences in the United Kingdom, the first held by the AGS with the RHS in London in 1936 and then, every ten years since 1951, popular and fruitful gatherings of rock gardeners from around the world have been held jointly by the AGS with the SRGC.

The last such event was held in Edinburgh in 2001, though it hardly seems so long ago. Hosted by the SRGC and supported by the AGS it was hailed as a tremendous success with over 500 attendees assembling at the Heriot Watt University from, as we Scots say "a' the airts"! (Ed: "a' the airts" translates as "all corners of the globe")

The Eighth International Alpine Conference is being hosted by the [Alpine Garden Society](#), supported by the [Scottish Rock Garden Club](#) and will be held in Nottingham, in the Midlands of England, from 14th to 17th April 2011 and the Members of both AGS and SRGC hope to welcome a great many friends old and new to this much anticipated event.

In this, and the following issues of IRG, we will feature many of the plants chosen as emblems of the great organisations worldwide who exist to foster interest in alpine plants and which typify alpine plants for even non-gardeners and we wish also to highlight the Eighth International Alpine Conference:

### [Alpines 2011- Alpines without Frontiers.](#)

Clicking on the words (highlighted in blue) will take you to details of the [programme for the Conference](#) and [booking forms to print out](#) should you wish to apply by post or [to direct internet booking](#) on the AGS Website.

There is a £100 discount available to those booking and paying in full for a place at the conference before 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010 so that is surely a great incentive to book early!



Some [assisted places to the conference are available to Students](#) of Horticulture or those who have begun a horticultural career in the past ten years. [Applications on this form](#) should be made to the AGS Director at Pershore. Those awarded such a place will have the full conference and accommodation fee covered but will need to make their own travel arrangements to and from Nottingham.



The venue for Alpines 2011 will be the [East Midlands Conference Centre at the University of Nottingham](#), which has superb modern facilities for all conference requirements and very comfortable single room residential accommodation, all on the same site.



There are quite a few members who have been at all the joint international conferences: there must be a good reason for such loyalty....why not come along and find out what the draw is? There have also been "Interim" Conferences that have been held in New Zealand by NZAGS and by NARGS in the USA and both the Czech and Dutch societies have held major conferences so there is clearly considerable international enthusiasm for such events and the 2011 conference will continue this happy tradition of friendly gatherings.

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### ---Alpine flowers as emblems---

As we consider the plants which the various organisations have chosen for their emblems, we

must begin with the most famous alpine flower, surely truly recognisable worldwide, and which was chosen to represent [Alpines 2011](#) - the Edelweiss, *Leontopodium alpinum*. Well prepared for its life in the european alps, with thick leaves and flower heads protected by fat, furry bracts this plant is seen on coins as well as featuring in everything from songs to souvenir items. Surprisingly, it is not as widely grown in gardens as one might expect.



*Leontopodium alpinum* by Cliff Booker



Austrian two-cent Euro coin



Edelweiss brooch 1848 Tiffany and Co.



*Leontopodium 'Mignon'*

Ian Young



*Leontopodium alpinum* from Carinthia Franz Hadacek

While the “typical” plant is from the mountains of Europe, there is a Himalayan representative and plants with the name New Zealand Edelweiss from the Southern Hemisphere too, which all ties rather well with the title for the 2011 Conference, “Alpines without Frontiers”.

The Edelweiss seems tailor-made to be the emblem of the 2011 conference and to represent the friendly international spirit of this event.

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left: *L. alpinum* from Styria



right: *L. alpinum* ssp. *nivale* from Italy



One of the southern hemisphere Edelweiss-  
***Leucogynnes leontopodium*** thriving on a raised bed in Aberdeen, North East Scotland, Scotland.



A second New Zealand Edelweiss-  
***Leucogynnes grandiceps*** –in habitat on Mount Cook.

The two N.Z. species do well in many British gardens. In some areas they do not flower very well but the bright silver foliage is attractive throughout the year.

photos by Ian Young.

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The Alpine Garden Society, founded in 1929, chose for their emblem ***Gentiana acaulis*** with its striking blue stemless flowers. The plant makes a real impact on the reverse of the handsome sterling silver Farrer Medal, the award made to the most meritorious plant in an AGS Show.

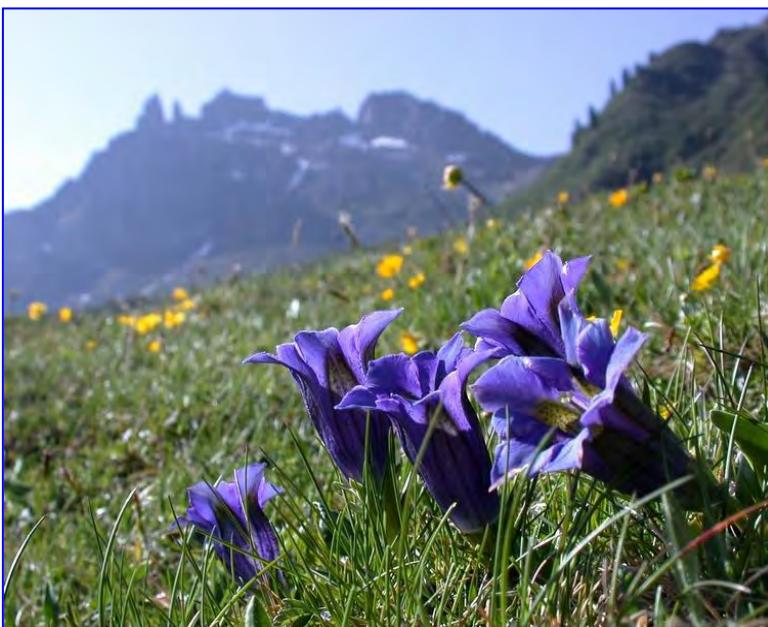


Farrer Medal of the Alpine Garden Society



*Gentiana acaulis* in the English garden of Ian McEnergy

Another of the alpine plants most recognisable to a wide public, photogenic and reasonably willing to grow in most good soils, *Gentiana acaulis* is one of the species everyone wanting to grow alpine and rock garden plants will seek out for their collection.



*Gentiana acaulis* in the Dolomites



photos Cliff Booker



left: embroidered special edition 'stamp'  
below: Austrian one cent Euro coin



*Gentiana acaulis*, one of the most brightly coloured jewels of the spring European mountain flora, growing from the Alps and Carpathians to north eastern Spain, Italy and into the former Yugoslavia in acid areas around 1400 to 300m is a plant which has drawn many a first time visitor, either to the Alps or an alpine plant show, into the excitement of the wild mountain plants of the world.

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**Dodecatheon** is an herbaceous perennial found widely in North America. The umbels of reflexing flowers in shades of pink, red or white look very 'sharp' over the primula-like foliage. 'Shooting Stars' as these flowers are known can be found growing up to an elevation of 3500m so they have great mountain credentials to commend them to the [North](#)



[American Rock Garden Society](#) as their emblem. NARGS covers the large geographic area of the USA as well as having several chapters in Canada. NARGS in common with clubs such as SRGC and AGS, also enjoys a wide overseas membership.

There are several Chapters of NARGS which have their own emblems of plants of particular relevance to their local area though some, such as the Minnesota Chapter, a keen group who have often been well represented at the Alpine International meetings, retain the *Dodecatheon* connection. This plant is classified as a Primula, though that name is not commonly used and naturally this plate from a book of 1846 uses the name *Dodecatheon meadia*.



This expanse of *Dodecatheon pulchellum* was pictured in Alberta, Canada by [Cohan Fulford](#) who tells us something about this location:

For many, western Canada is synonymous with the prairies: vast expanses of grassland, ranches and farmland with trees found mainly in farm shelterbelts or along watercourses.

In the north, and along the mountains, there are equally endless vistas of forests: spruce, fir and pine stretching to the frigid timberline and broken only by lakes and near impassable muskeg. In between these two great biomes is a rich zone where they mix: the area of mixed soils, mixed forest and mixed farming! Many grassland and open parkland species are at home here along roadsides, pastures and other clearings, while many classic plants of the boreal forest can be found threading through our patchwork of fields, pastures, woodlands and wetlands. Organic soils develop in wet areas through build-up of peat and/or decaying grasses and other plants. These wetlands are a great reservoir of native species, but also much used for grazing,

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and often for hay crops or even cereal crops, in years dry enough to cultivate. This means that the habitat is not stable on most properties, with periods of lighter or heavier grazing, succession to woody species, bulldozing to clear them, or even ploughing for cultivation.

The *Dodecatheon* is a locally common species here, found in moderate to large numbers in scattered colonies. They grow in low, wet to seasonally wet areas, and fairly sunny conditions, so they need a habitat which is treeless to lightly wooded at most. They can survive in grazed areas, though heavy grazing/trampling seems to not allow their tall flower stems to develop.



A few days later, on another bike ride, I was happy to find another very rich site for the species. The habitat was generally similar: a grassy, low wet area at the edge of woods, probably grazed at times, not cultivated or mowed.

What was different about this site is that the *Dodecatheon* continued into a less wet part of the meadow, growing there to great effect with *Antennaria sp*, among other plants--great idea for the garden - perhaps without the dandelions!



Cohan, an artist by inclination, has recently moved back to the country to [reconnect with the soil](#), after several decades of living in big cities currently enjoying menial part-time work leaving him time to tramp around in the woods and try to

convince the trees on his acreage to allow him a little space for gardening. To get him through the long boreal winters he nurtures exotic xerophytic plants indoors! In better weather he makes use of his trusty botanising vehicle.



copyright cohan

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### ***Physoplexis comosa*:**

photographed at an AGS show by Diane Clement.

Diane is Assistant Director of the AGS Seed Exchange. A keen exhibitor in AGS and SRGC shows, Diane is a valued contributor to the SRGC Forum and author of the [Midland Gardener's Diary](#) on the AGS website. She is, as one might guess, a passionate advocate of growing from seed.



This photo of Diane Clement botanising in Turkey is by [Jo Hynes](#).

Devon, who holds a National Collection of hardy Cyclamen and is much involved with the National Gardens Scheme in England.



The Dutch club, **Nederlandse Rotsplanten Vereniging , NRV**, founded in 1975, chose the unusual and beautiful plant, ***Physoplexis comosa*** as their emblem. Luckily, a floral logo need not be troubled by name changes from *Phyteuma*. At first glance this plant seems an unlikely member of the campanula family because of its unusual flagon shaped flowers which give it the common name 'Devil's Claw'.

Like many of its relatives this plant from limestone and dolomitic crevices of the Southern European Alps can be a martyr to slug damage. Given a prime spot in a trough or raised bed to minimise that risk, it is a wonderful subject for the garden or a show plant.

*Physoplexis* one of those plants which has a distinctive appearance and so often catches the eye of the artist. In this case, Anne Chambers who has won an RHS

Gold medal for her botanical watercolours. Anne has her Scottish Garden filled with her most favoured plants- *Rhododendron*, *Arisaema* and *Primula*. Her husband, Viv, cares for them when she journeys to China and the Himalayas to study them in the wild. Anne with *Arisaema wilsonii*: this plant won the Forrest Medal at Aberdeen SRGC show in 2005.



photo by Sandy Leven

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Another classic plant of the European mountains is *Soldanella*; shown here in a watercolour painting by Anne Chambers.

*Soldanella* is one of the “snow-melt” plants which perform the apparently impossible task of pushing through the frozen ground as the snow retreats in spring; rising perfectly formed at the edge of snow patches. One of the most dainty members of the primula family this is the emblem of the Czech Klub Skalničkářů Praha - [the Rock Garden Club of Prague](#), formed in 1970 : this is the main club in a group of regional Czech clubs and must be one of the most active and committed groups of alpine gardeners. Who else would stage outdoor exhibitions of their plants over two week periods in Prague? These great alpine gardeners also have a Journal and [web based resource](#) and have hosted very successful International events, as have the Norwegians.

There have been ‘Interim’ conferences held in North America and the New Zealand. There is a tremendous enthusiasm for these international get-togethers.

***Soldanella carpatica***

photo Geir Moen

In the Dolomites



photo Cliff Booker



This is one of the most charming of high alpine flowers. Where it is happy, as it seems to be in [Geir Moen’s](#) garden in Norway, (above right) it will form spreading mats of glossy, kidney-shaped leaves and in early spring will bear the pendulous blue-purple, bell-shaped ‘pixie-hat’ flowers with deeply fringed petals.

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Readers who access the IRG from the home page of the SRGC website will be familiar with this photograph by Ian Young of a lone *Dryas* flower in northern Norway near the Finnish border.



Finnish postage stamp



*Dryas octopetala*



Icelandic postage stamp

***Dryas octopetala***, the Mountain Avens, has wide geographical distribution and can be found in remote Scottish locations. In favoured spots where the soil is not too acid it can make large mats and flower well. A typically attractive alpine, with large, showy white flowers with golden stamens and tiny oak-like foliage and fluffy seedheads, it has proved a popular choice as the Scottish Rock Garden Club emblem and was recently chosen, by public acclamation, as the national flower of Iceland.



Flowers and seed heads   Photo [Bjarne Oddane](#)

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Photo Viggo Ursfjord (yet another plantsman with an interest in birdwatching)  
*Dryas octopetala* flowering in profusion at the Arctic-alpine Botanic garden in Tromsø, Norway.

The [Scottish Rock Garden Club](#) was founded in 1933 and is as determined now as it was in those days, to spread knowledge and interest in rock garden, alpines, woodland plants and bulbs as widely as possible. Approximately one third of the membership is from outside the UK meaning that the internet is the most immediate way to bring all the members "together".



With so many supporters outside Scotland the SRGC is very mindful of its duties to all the members. The high volume of visitors to the website and the level of activity in the Forum is an indicator of the value in using the World Wide Web to complement the Journal in reaching out to the membership. It is an added attraction to existing members and most successful in finding new "recruits" by demonstrating the scope of the interests and distribution of the membership.

*Dryas* seedheads at Lünersee, Austria Photo:[Thomas Huber](#)

### Harry Jans

From this overture to the first few of our rock garden clubs, let us now make a start on a similar approach to the speakers of the 2011 Conference.

The first introduction made in IRG was to Harry Jans, so it is fitting that we should begin with Harry, who will speak at Alpines 2011 on "Plant Hunting on the Roof of the World".



I think it is safe to say that the subject of this talk will not be the remarkable garden Harry has created at his home in Loenen in the Netherlands. In that garden he has managed to evoke the mountains that so engage him by building tufa walls, towers and cliffs that provide a successful home for a number of alpine plants that are often found to be difficult in cultivation. It is not every grower who has *Jancaea heldrichii* seeding around in a happy colony!

In a life which does encompass his "day job" as a District Co-ordinator for the Ministry of Transport and family holidays – which often involve skiing- the passion of his wife Hannie – we see testament to the ability of so many

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plantsmen to live in some sort of time warp which clearly involves more than twenty-four hours in every day; such is the level of activity Harry and so many of the Speakers for the Alpines 2011 Conference display.

A glance at [Harry's website](#) will show the breadth of his alpine passions: there are over 6500 photographs from his travels all over the world and from his garden. He trained as a garden designer, well shown by the clever layout and maintenance details of his own garden. In international demand as a speaker and tour leader, Harry has embraced the new technology, not just from his website but in the production of DVDs to share his experience even further. This affable man, a grower, plantsman and traveller is a fine ambassador for the Dutch Rock Garden Club, of which he is a founder and past president. Having travelled so widely on speaking tours he typifies the friendly International Rock Gardener and the ethos of the upcoming "Alpine without Frontiers".



In coming issues IRG will introduce readers to more of the Speakers at the Eighth International Conference to be held in Nottingham.

More extensive biographies of the Alpines 2011 speakers are being posted [here on the AGS website](#) – check the page to see updates.

[Alpines 2011 -Alpines without Frontiers](#) Thursday, 14 April to Sunday, 17 April 2011..... to save 20 per cent on the cost: book and pay in full before 31st August 2010

Two plants which mean a lot to me: Harry Jans



*Jancaea heldreichii* in Greece

photo Harry Jans

In May 2010 I was in Greece for the first time and was happy to see this wonderful plant from the gesneriad family in its natural habitat. Since 1988 I have been growing all kinds of alpines in tufa, including *Jancaea heldreichii*, from Greece, which can be found in the wild on the 'mountain of the Gods', Mount Olympus which seems appropriate for this fabled plant.

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Tufa, a porous limestone rock of variable hardness, can be the key to success of many difficult to grow alpines such as *Jancaea*. If you choose to use tufa, try to get rocks as big as possible. One big rock can hold many tiny alpines and can soon be a small rock garden in itself. In my garden I have tried to use tufa in many different ways: as rock for the rock garden; in a tufa wall; in a tufa column, a big rock on a stainless-steel pole and in a tufa wall in an alpine house.

In all these ways, different plants were chosen to settle down on each different structure.



Many plants are very happy planted out in tufa. For the piece of wall shown (left) approximately 200 holes were drilled into the stones of 25mm (1") diameter. These have been filled over the years with many different rock garden plants. The planting medium I have used consists of potting soil, sharp sand, tufa dust and finely ground peat moss. I also add a small amount of Mini Osmocote.

The north side of the wall houses one of the great eye catchers of the garden: a colony of *Jancaea heldreichii*. This plant, which is supposedly very difficult to grow, feels quite at home in this wall—so much in fact, that over 40 seedlings have sprouted.

Planting tufa is not difficult but it takes a long time to plant all your tufa rocks. I drill holes 2.5 cm wide by a maximum of 15 cm deep. The holes are slanted slightly downwards and are sometimes interconnected.

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Selecting where the holes should be drilled requires a great deal of thought as the holes have to suit the needs of high alpine plants with sensitive moisture requirements. The holes are partially filled with a mixture of 60% tufa grit (0-3 mm), 10% peat, 15% fibrous loam and 15% chopped sphagnum moss. Each selected plant is then put in position, carefully and gently spreading the roots; the holes are filled up and the soil firmed cautiously with a suitable stick or rod. Always remember the roots are very easily damaged. Sometimes the plant is anchored with small pieces of tufa round the neck to prevent it from being pushed out by the first frost. For planting I use small plants. Seedlings which are big enough to handle are ideal to be planted out. Well-rooted cuttings also give good results. Another successful method is to sow fresh seeds directly on the tufa rocks. Because of the super results I do not even bother with putting some of the seeds in the seed pots first. You will see that it will take some years but many seeds will germinate and it is

these seedlings which usually give the best plants.

### **Lhasa and *Rheum nobile***



If you had asked me 25-years ago (or even now!) "Harry, where is your favourite place to go?" my answer would be: Lhasa in Tibet, without a doubt. This place has something special.

For many years it was neither easy to get there nor well known by plant hunters because for a long time it was a forbidden place for Westerners to visit.

It was in 2005 during the AGS Tibet Kangshung trip that I first had a chance to visit this, for me, "holy place" with its impressive Potala Palace at about 3650m.

Since then I have been lucky to visit it on two botanical jeep trips from Chengdu to Lhasa in the autumn 2008 and summer in 2009.

The most striking plants I saw were the giant rhubarb, *Rheum nobile* : up to 2m tall and at some places you could count well over 250 flowering individuals.

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*Rheum nobile*- sentinels on guard on the mountainside

photo Harry Jans

This *Rheum nobile* is, by the way, a much collected herbal medicine for the Tibetans and you can buy fresh collected plants near the road. In some areas they are hard to find because of over-collecting.



cut stems of the giant *Rheum nobile*

photo Harry Hans

*R. nobile* was first described in 1855 by Joseph Dalton Hooker and Thomas Thomson. Hooker wrote of the plant:

"The present is certainly the most striking of the many fine alpine plants of Sikkim and though in every botanical character, as also in the acid juice of the stem, a genuine Rhubarb, it differs so remarkably in habit and general appearance from any of its congeners, that at first sight it could not be recognized as one of them. I first saw it from a distance of fully a mile, dotting the black cliffs of the Lachen valley at 14,000 feet [4,200 m] elevation, in inaccessible situations, and was quite at a loss to conceive what it could be; not was it till I had turned back the curious bracteal leaves and examined the flowers that I was persuaded of its being a true Rhubarb."

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### Todd Boland

From Harry, who has travelled internationally to talk on alpine plants, Margaret Young is now pleased to introduce here a man who is very well known in North America but for whom his talk at Alpines 2011 will be his first European speaking engagement.



Todd Boland, who holds a Masters of Science degree in Plant Ecology, is a Canadian who is now returned to his birthplace of St John's, Newfoundland, to work as a research horticulturalist at the [Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden](#).

Todd is another gardener whose interest started early... in his case with food crops though he soon realised the attraction of alpines, made his first rock garden and so moved inexorably to the heights of the gardening world! Todd's work in horticulture has lead him to various spheres of the discipline – a variety which serves him well in his diverse duties professionally in working to protect endangered endemic plants in Newfoundland and as state representative for the Canadian National Invasive Plants Council.

Todd joined the Newfoundland Chapter of NARGS in 1994 and is the serving Chair of that group.

He has been closely involved in many NARGS activities; the Newfoundland Chapter has hosted [main NARGS Meetings](#) and Todd has also served a term as a Director of NARGS. With his photographic skills allied to his plant knowledge, it was natural that Todd would be a massive help to the developing NARGS' web presence; publishing a "[Plant of the Month](#)" feature and overseeing the image gallery. More recently he has been performing [more internet duties](#) as one of the moderators of the [NARGS Forum](#).

His interests in his own garden include the breeding of ornamentals, such as beardless iris, primulas and dianthus and to "maintain my sanity through the long Newfoundland winters" the indoor cultivation of [orchids](#), and travelling in pursuit of his other passion, [ornithology](#).

Yes, you've guessed it; this is another gardener living a 28 hour day!

*Cymbidium* photo Todd Boland



A minor digression here to Todd's place of work, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Botanical Garden.

MUN Botanical Garden is a resource centre for basic and applied botanical research and education with a particular interest in the flora of Newfoundland and Labrador which seeks to foster an appreciation of natural history in the development and future of the university and the province. The Garden has been open to the public since July, 1977. Originally named **Oxen Pond Botanic Park**, it was inaugurated in 1971.

This attractive plaque is at the entrance to the Garden.

The [Twinflower plant \*Linnaea borealis\* L.](#) was originally chosen for the MUNBG's floral emblem in 1971. In 1999, it was also chosen as the title of the [Friends of the Garden newsletter](#).

"Twinflower" is another place where you can read Todd's articles and see his photographs but there's no substitute for reality, so there is little wonder that we at IRG are hoping that you will take up the invitation of the AGS and SRGC to join the international gardeners at Alpines 2011.

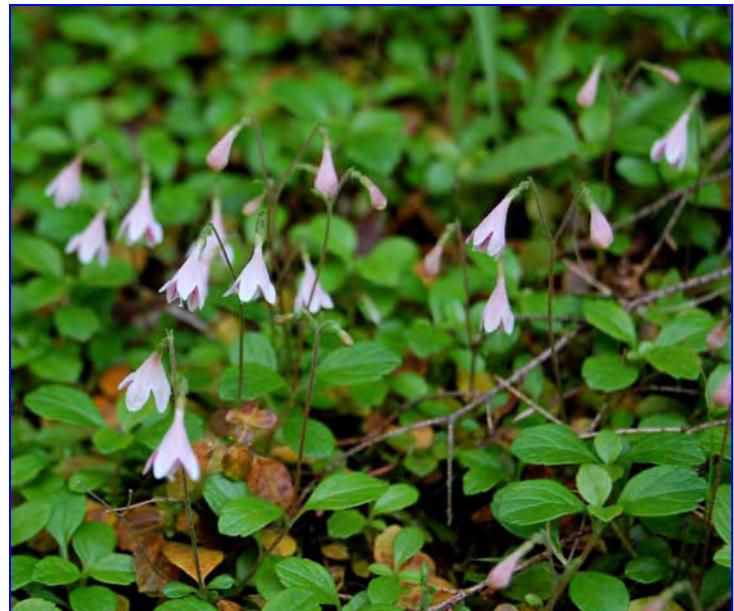
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Another connection: The Twinflower has a terrific provenance, being named for [Carl Linnaeus](#) (1707-1778); the father of modern taxonomy and ecology, who laid the building blocks for binomial nomenclature. This plant is also the floral emblem of the Swedish Society of Amateur Gardeners: [Sällskapet Trädgårdssamatörerna](#). The STA was founded in 1930 and currently has an extensive membership of around 8500 in the Nordic countries. The aim of STA is to bring together people interested in all aspects of gardening with a focus on perennials, shrubs and trees and also to disseminate knowledge of plants of the Scandinavian countries, which does, of course, like the *Linnaea*, relate well to our interest in alpine, rock garden and woodland plants.

*Linnaea borealis* is a plant of circumpolar distribution, growing in moist forests from subarctic to cool temperate regions. It can be found in North America, as far south as North California, east to Tennessee and the Appalachians and west to Arizona.

Extending further south at higher altitudes, it grows south to the Alps in Europe and to northern Japan in Asia. It is a treasured plant in the pine woodlands of Scotland, where it is considered, as in its English locations, to be an indicator species of ancient woodland. Our illustrations of this charming plant, with creeping stems, evergreen foliage and slim flowering stalks rising from a pair of basal leaves to hold the hanging pairs of dainty pink five lobed campanulate blooms are from Nova Scotia, Canada. The photographer for these is Kristl Walek.



Blooms in profusion in Nova Scotia, Canada. The photographer for these is Kristl Walek.



Blooms in profusion in Nova Scotia

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It seems that in Ontario the plant is rather scarce but, as is evident from her pictures, in Nova Scotia Kristl has found it to be a highlight of the June flora, discovering that the plants in “glorious, full bloom fill the woods and line the roadsides”.



Deep pink *Linnaea* blossoms contrast with clear white *Cornus canadensis* bracts -here in a sunnier position the rounded ovals of the twinflower leaves take on a tinted sheen that is reminiscent of *Shortia* foliage.

Kristl said this in 2008 of collecting *Linnaea* seed: “The *Linnaea* grew in the same area as the *Cornus canadensis*, making this an ‘easy collect’, as much as the sticky seed of the *Linnaea* is ever easy to collect. Better just to cut off the seed stalks rather than drive yourself crazy (you will know what I mean if you have ever gathered these seeds)”.

Kristl Walek began [Gardens North](#) from her home in 1991, developing it into the greatly respected seed company with the strapline ‘Seeds for the world’ which is rather apt: GN has grown to have a international presence, currently conducting business from the website in over 30 countries and shipping worldwide, wherever seed import regulations allow. Kristl used to live in the very cold Ottawa Valley of [Ontario](#), where she was an active member of the [Ottawa Valley Rock Garden and Horticultural Society](#).

In 2009 Kristl “upped sticks” and moved to the much milder Annapolis Valley of [Nova Scotia](#).



Kristl Walek is a passionate plantswoman who is working on extensive seed researches and she shares with the readers of the SRGC Forum some definitive insights into this work as well as describing her daily work collecting and sorting seed -following the hyperlinks (shown in this text in blue) will take you to many articles by her, including her ongoing reports of “My Bit of Heaven” in the SRGC Forum, the most recent being her tales of the plants she is finding on her travels in [Nova Scotia this year](#).

**More on other International Rock Gardeners and the Alpines 2011 Conference Speakers in the next issue of IRG.....**