

International Rock Gardener



----International Rock Gardener----

March 2010

Dear Fellow International Rock Gardeners,



As we celebrate here the beauty of the gardens in the mountains and vice versa we must give a thought to all the plant hunters of the past, without whom we would be growing only plants native to our own country. Gardeners owe a great debt to these people who have roamed the wild places of the world to bring so many wonderful plants into cultivation. Nowadays a different world exists and there are many constraints in place to restrict or even prohibit the collection of any kind of plant materials. Sadly the rigour often applied to the enforcement of such regulations is not always so scrupulously applied to the greater problem of habitat destruction

which can lead to the utter eradication of a species. Many think it is more logical to enable sustainable collection to allow plant numbers to be built up (and so protected) in cultivation than to see populations wiped out by careless or illegal development. With IRG we can all share the joy of great plants photographed in their natural habitat or in gardens and rejoice in the variety of nature.

-----GARDENS IN THE MOUNTAINS-----



Corydalis hamata by [Harry Jans](#) (Cover picture)

This plant is one of the showiest species of *Corydalis* (Papaveraceae family, section *Hamatae*) from China. It is found at higher altitudes (3300-5000m) in the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan, but also in Eastern Tibet. The best plants I found where growing on the Bai Ma Shan in Yunnan and on the Mengji pass and Da Xue Shan in Sichuan. It grows most of the time in moist conditions like wet alpine scree, brook sides in alpine meadows, very often together with *Primula zambalensis* or *Caltha scaposa*. (see IRG February 2010) Sometimes it grows even in small running streams.

The flowers are spectacular with its deep yellow flowers and purple/blue tip. They can reach up to 40cm, but most of the time they are between 10-20cm tall. The roots are soft and fleshy. It is in cultivation, but not widely distributed. To make good growing conditions in the garden is not easy. Maybe in countries like Norway it is more easily growable. As with all seeds of *Corydalis*, the seed of *C. hamata* is not viable for long.

Now to introduce another [International Rock Gardener](#); [Tim Lever](#), who as a recipient of Merlin Trust support, was with Harry Jans and John Mitchell on that Chinese trip in 2006.

The son of Rachel and Keith Lever and grandson of the late Jim Lever, Tim is one of the United Kingdom's younger International Rock Gardeners.



Tim, a familiar face selling plants or giving talks, works with his family in their Aberconwy Nursery in Wales.



Corydalis hamata
in habitat

----International Rock Gardener----

Corydalis hamata – the story goes on.....

Note from ZZ- this small but most frequent journal in the world circle of rock gardeners is in some ways a sport field; where the different British and Dutch experiences are in friendly competition with Slavonic and Germanic ones. The classic literature is western but the Central Europe has different weather and different growing methods. So it is my duty to add to the pessimistic end of Harry's article some optimistic information from Czech quarterly Bulletin Skalničky.

Jaroslav Baláž does his rock gardening in the Czech Moravian Highland at elevation 550 m. He obtained seed of *Corydalis hamata* from expedition of Vojtěch Holubec (Bai Ma Shan, 4400 m) from a plant in a narrow wet canyon with limestone screes. Baláž planted it into crevice 3-5 cm broad filled with sandy compost soil (from died alpinus?) and grit in relation 1:1. The crevice garden is from chalk (chert?) stones. His plant flowered in the middle of May and was 20 cm high but with different colour combination: yellow front with blue spurs. Leaves were in denser more compact arrangement than on pictures from China.

----- GARDENS IN THE MOUNTAINS -----



Convolvulus boissieri ssp. *compactus*, Albania

Fritz Kummert

***Convolvulus boissieri* Steud. *subsp. compactus* (Boiss.) Stace**

Synonyms: *Convolvulus cochlearis* Griseb., *Convolvulus compactus* Boiss., *Convolvulus parnassicus* Boiss. & Orph., *Convolvulus suendermannii* Bornm.



C. compactus, detail

ZZ

by [Fritz Kummert](#), Austria

This plant occurs on the Balkan Peninsula, from Albania & S. Bulgaria to C. Greece (perhaps also in Montenegro and/or Macedonia), nearly always on serpentine rocks, which can be found much more often in Albania than, for instance, in Austria. The form we saw in southern Albania in flower was the "white form". It grew in cracks and fissures as well as in small screes. Even small seedlings had very strongly developed roots going down into the rock to anchor them in place.

----International Rock Gardener----



C. boissieri ssp. *compactus* var. *suendermannii* - plant in cultivation
Milan Halada

C. boissieri* ssp. *compactus

This subspecies, in the rank of a species, *Convolvulus compactus* Boiss., is widely distributed in Turkey where a "pink form" is also found. Seeds of the Turkish forms are often collected and available through the seed lists.

Germination after treating with GA3 (0,1 % for 24 hours) is quick, although the germination-rate is not higher than 50 % after my experience. Cultivation in the open without permanent cover is in our

experience not possible in Central Europe, it is a plant especially for the alpine- house. Propagation by cuttings, taken in late summer to early winter, is difficult.



Convolvulus boissieri ssp. *boissieri*, Sierra Cazorla,

[Mojmír Pavelka](#)

The other subspecies, ***Convolvulus boissieri* subsp. *boissieri*** (Synonym: *Convolvulus nitidus* Boiss.), is endemic to Spain. We saw it in the Sierra Cazorla in the alpine thorn-cushion-vegetation. I don't know if it is further distributed in Spain.

----International Rock Gardener----



Steppe in Ala Dag with flowering *Pterocephalus* and cushions of *Convolvulus*.

***Convolvulus compactus* Boiss.** by [Zdeněk Zvolánek](#)

In 1986 Josef Jurášek and the author visited great subalpine stony steppe at 2000 m at the feet of the highest peaks of limestone massif Ala Dag in Turkish Anatolia. Here is one well-known locality of this variable species. This variety has large silky white sessile flowers and seeds- these are both delicatessen and sweet cradle for small black beetles with extra long nose.



The plant community is formed from *Convolvulus compactus*, rose flowering tight green mats of *Convolvulus assyriacus*, pink *Pterocephalus pinardii* and dwarf lilac *Salvia caespitosa* (just to mention the main actors of the local elegant performance). At this part of steppe we see minimum of grasses so we can call those inhabitants saxatile plants.

Later I went there with Rudi Weiss and he photographed one naked root, the superb weapon or tool to go deep into the heart of limestone bedrock.

Rudi Weiss is from Waiblingen Germany; another travelling International Rock Gardener!



Tap root of *Convolvulus compactus*

----International Rock Gardener----



Convolvulus compactus, Beauty slope
ZZ

Writing about Turkish *Convolvulus* species begs a remark about very distinctive dwarf ***Convolvulus phrygius***.

Jurášek and Pavelka found in Turkey only one locality -near Lake Salda, where this species grows together with *C. compactus* and they form some hybrids there. The stone of this low steppe there (1400 m) is probably serpentine.

I have pictures only from my cultivation, which is in stony mineral soil with sun bathing all day and no watering. Some plants are in crevices some in open beds and they are perfectly compact. I can say the same about cultivation of *Convolvulus compactus*.



Convolvulus phrygius

-growing
on the
Beauty
slope,
Czech
Karst



All plants are seedlings. Last year I planted *Convolvulus boissieri* ssp. *compactus* from limestones of Bulgarian Ali Botusch Mts., which is distinct in character and was described as ***C. suendermannii*** but not generally accepted. It is surely good variety of the species and superb compact rock garden plant with satiny pink funnel form corolla.



Convolvulus boissieri ssp. *compactus* v. *suendermannii* ZZ

----International Rock Gardener----

International Rock Gardeners Dieter and Rosi Zschummel are an inseparable team. Dieter says he is nothing without Rosi. They garden at Wallendorf, near Leipzig in Germany. Rosi was a teacher and Dieter a chemical engineer. Between them they combine the experience of science and discipline, patience and determination as well as enquiring minds and a thirst for adventure....and no ambition for “retirement”!



A love for alpine plants, extensive travel expeditions and gardening have resulted in a remarkable collection of plants, alpine houses, frames, rock and tufa gardens surrounding them as well as part of the school in which they live.

Larger expeditions began with exploring the Golden West of the USA, then Iran, where they discovered new *Dionysias* (*D. zschummelii* etc.) and latterly they have travelled in Western China and Tibet. Dieter is in great demand for Lectures and [his photos are used in many websites.](#)

Rosi and Dieter Zschummel

----- GARDENS IN THE MOUNTAINS -----

Solmslaubachia prolifera* and *S. baiogoinensis by Dieter Zschummel

Solms-laubachia prolifera

D&R. Z

Solms-laubachia in the Brassicaceae (Cruciferae) family is a Sino-Himalayan genus. The species are high alpiners and most of them grow in scree, only one prefers rock crevices. Recently botanists (Al-Shebaz and Chinese authors) have enlarged the genus adding four new described species: all members of the genus *Desideria* and one of the genus *Phaeonychium* to *Solms-laubachia*. Genus *Desideria* was separated before from *Solms-laubachia* for instance by its leaves which are entire in *Solms-laubachia* but divided in *Desideria*. But results of molecular analysis and screening seed surfaces show that the species of both genera should be united into one genus. So genus *Solms-laubachia* now contains 26 species and it is to be expected that new species will be found in the future.



----International Rock Gardener----



We found ***Solms-laubachia prolifera*** growing on Dongda La (SE-Tibet) at an elevation of about 5100 m in rough scree together with other interesting alpine plants like *Saxifraga*, *Corydalis*, *Eritrichium*, *Saussurea*, *Androsace* and *Silene*. The colour of leaves and even flowers is variable, adapting to the colour of the rocks on Dongda La, which can be in several shades from brown to blue-grey. Another species - also previously in genus *Desideria* is ***Solms-laubachia baiogoinensis***.



We also found it in Tibet at altitudes of about 5000 m on high passes SE of the town Tsetang, which is situated SE of Lhasa. There it is settled in finer scree, which we think, is granite gravel avoiding the competition of other plants. We do not have information about either species in cultivation and suppose that cultivation will not be easy.

S. prolifera in fruit

----International Rock Gardener----

For a long time the genus *Solms-laubachia* was known only from Yunnan and the first species a little better known -for instance *Ss. pulcherrima*, *retropilosa*, *linearifolia* and *xerophyta* are known in NW-Yunnan's DA Xue Shan (Big Snow Mountains), Beima Shan and Yulong Shan. A few alpine enthusiasts grow some of these. -DZ

Thanks to [Jozef Lemmens of Belgium](#) for these photos of other *Solms-laubachia* species in the wild and his garden. Jozef is interested in all alpine plants, with a liking for cushion plants especially but these floriferous crucifers seem to have caught his eye and the attention of his camera.



[Jozef Lemmens](#)

Solms-laubachia linearifolia growing on Mt. Shika near Zhongdian in Yunnan



Solms-laubachia zhongdianensis Shika Mt. in Yunnan



Solms-laubachia xerophyta – below



S. linearifolia in Jozef Lemmens' garden, grown from Holubec seed.



----International Rock Gardener----

-----MOUNTAINS IN THE GARDENS-----

Helleborus thibetanus

by [Pavel Sekerka](#), [Botanical Garden Prague](#)



Pavel Sekerka

The synonyms of this species are *Helleborus chinensis* and *Helleborus viridis* var. *thibetanus*. This lonely species is completely geographically isolated from the rest of genus. Plant grows in NW Sichuan and Southern China, where it is seeking for cool shady mountain forests and shrubberies in the river valleys. Similar conditions love ferns and Astilbe. The elevation is from 1100 up to 3700 m. This species is distinct with fine gracile constitution. The stems of this Hellebore appear immediately after snow melts (in nature it is in March).

Helleborus thibetanus, rose form

Helleborus thibetanus, white form



This perennial species is about 30 cm tall. Plant has lovely bell shaped flowers or sepals (one or two per stem) up to 6 cm in diameter. They are white to red- pink and blooming period is short: one or two weeks.

The leaves with toothed margins are composed from 8-9 leaflets. Important information is that this species aestivate in summer time (the leaves go dormant early in season). The unique characteristic of this species is forming only two carpels with seeds so the crop of seeds is low. Germinating plants form true first leaves without visible cotyledons.

H. thibetanus was described more than 100 years ago but is quite new in cultivation in the west: it was introduced in the end of last the century thanks to activities of new Chinese businesses. With the right care plants grow well. This species needs cool shaded places with higher humidity and permanently moist soil during growing season. Soil must be light and rich with good amount of humus. In dry and hot conditions plants aestivated too soon and the

result is their weakness. *H. thibetanus* is fully hardy in the warmer countries. The future of this pretty species will be in intelligent breeding with other Hellebores.

----International Rock Gardener----

***Viola delphinantha* and its sisters** by McPavlis

There is a holy trinity of three European shrubby species waiting for broader cultivation. English plantsman Roger Bevan was first man who visited all of them at their natural habitat in 1930s. Czech grower Vlastimil Pilous did the same 60 years later and you can see all the sisters in one tufa outcrop together with Bulgarian form of *Centaurea triumfetii* in Vlastimil's connoisseur's garden in Northern Bohemia. Macedonian *Viola kosaninii* is on left side Spanish *Viola cazorlensis* is in the middle (back) and Greek *Viola delphinantha* is on right. Cultivation in holes of tufa is not difficult and also planting in narrow crevices with north east exposure is good policy. All are crevice dwellers, but *V. cazorlensis* grows in open stony soil too. Their base stems are short and woody and there is bunch of wiry stems with unusual pink flowers.



Three shrubby Violas in tufa in the garden of Vlastimil Pilous

I visited last year (early July) the unknown Bulgarian locality of *V. delphinantha* in Ali Botusch Mts. Plants grows here in deep limestone canyon at elevation about 1400 m. Their flowers have very long red spurs and my friend who visited this locality earlier saw some plants on high cliffs with white flowers.

Ali Botusch Mts. Bulgaria



The main pollinator of these violas is a day-flying hawk moth, *Macroglossum stellatarum* (Lepidoptera, Sphingidae).

Moth photo [Hans Joschko](#)



----International Rock Gardener----



Picture, left, shows perfect condition of *Viola delphinantha* in granite crevice in the garden of Ota Vlasák.



Right: *Viola delphinantha* on a Greek postage stamp

That great plantsman, Wilhelm Schacht, called this viola "the finest alpine I have ever seen".



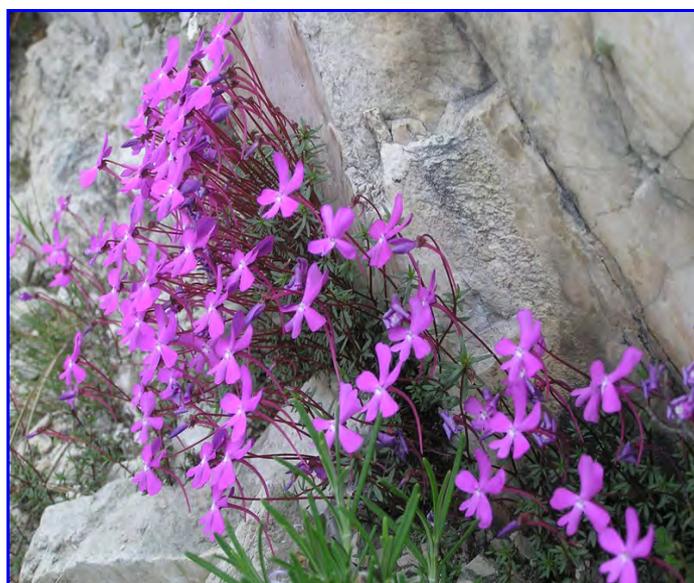
V. kosaninii was reported by V. Stevanović. & Kit Tan in 2000 as also being found from northern Greece which represents the southernmost limit of its range. It is a rare tertiary relict plant, extremely rare in cultivation... here it is depicted on a Macedonian postage stamp.

International Rock Gardener

Spanish plantsman, artist and conservationist [Rafael Díez Domínguez](#) who lives central Spain in the Guadarrama mountains, has photographed the beautiful *Viola cazorlensis* in the Cazorla Park, though this fine plant enjoys a wider distribution. Rafa 's bird and plant photos capture the essence of his subjects, as do his paintings.



Viola cazorlensis in the wild



Rafael Díez Domínguez

----International Rock Gardener----

Primula sonchifolia* and *Primula bhutanica

Martin Hajmi Hajman, [Arctic-alpine Botanic Garden, Tromsø, Norway](#).

Himalayan primroses from the noble Section Petiolares, subsection Sonchifolia can seem have their optimal conditions for outdoor cultivation provided in some moist and partly shaded gardens in Scotland. An ideal place is in the care of two wizards, Wendy and John Mattingley at [Cluny Gardens](#), Perthshire. *Primula sonchifolia* has typical thick dormant winter bud and flowers with forget-me-not blue to pale violet colours with yellow eye and dentate margins of petals. *P. bhutanica* is not so robust and has larger and darker (like shiny velvet) flowers with paler margins. The two will hybridise.

The cooler conditions of Tromsø botanic garden offers the possibility to grow these primroses in more open positions. The only problem is moist peaty substrate, which is too hot in full summer sunshine and heated roots will quickly rot.



P. bhutanica in Tromsø garden of Arve Elvebakk



P. sonchifolia at Cluny

[Susan Band](#)



Primula sonchifolia – emerging foliage

P. sonchifolia ssp. *emeishanensis*

M. Pavelka

The best method is to plant *P. sonchifolia* into crevices facing northwest into a substrate containing plenty of sand and with their collars surrounded with pure rough sand. Their rosettes are shaded with a rock in the crevice and the roots have cool run. Gardeners in the warmer lowlands can try to dig a gully under terrain to obtain suitable moist and cool microclimate for these Himalayan primroses.

----International Rock Gardener----
-----WORLD OF BULBS-----

Subgenus *Scorpiris*, the Juno Iris by [Michael Kammerlander](#)



Iris stenophylla, the third of the three species from Turkey, occurs mainly in the south of the Cilician Taurus, from the province of Isparta in the west, to Karaman Maras in the east and to Sivas in the north. The distribution area is partly overlapping with *I. persica* and *I. galatica* but *Iris stenophylla* grows more often at the higher levels, up to 2000 m.

There are two subspecies, *subsp. stenophylla* Hausskn. & Siehe ex Baker, and *subsp. allisonii* Mathew.

Subspecies *stenophylla* has up to five leaves. The sometimes very impressive colour varies from pale blue, steel blue and lilac-blue to a vigorous dark violet blue, more seldom a diffuse change from lilac to copper or pale brown occurs.

Subspecies *allisonii* has up to ten leaves, a shorter tube, a line of hairs on the middle of the haft of the falls, and the colour is a vigorous bright to dark blue. It occurs only in the province of Antalya.

Plants of all other areas are associated with subspecies *stenophylla*. The stem does not elongate after flowering time, so that the leaves and the fruit capsule are at ground level. Bract and bracteole are both green and equally long.

Around 1900 the German Botanist Walter Siehe described a plant from the south-east Taurus as *Iris heldreichii*. Siehe wrote in a publication: "I found these most beautiful and biggest species of the group in 1896 on the foothills of the Taurus". He described the colour as cobalt blue with a big violet blotch on the falls. A German friend of mine, now dead, collected a plant in the north of the province of Adana about twenty years ago and gave it to another friend near Munich, unfortunately without exact collecting details or a note of the approximately locality.

We are very happy to still grow a few plants of this remarkable rarity, which we hope we can propagate and spread in the future. *I. heldreichii* is associated with *I. stenophylla subsp. stenophylla* in all literature.

----International Rock Gardener----

Iris hymenopatha Mathew & Wendelbo

occurs only in the Zagros Mountains of Iran and is classified into two subspecies. The ground colour of the flowers of both subspecies is whitish, creamy-yellowish, pale smoky-grey or ice-blue, with more or less intense blue or blue-violet veins on the falls and a blue-violet zone surrounding the crest, but without the big dark blotch on the end of the falls as in the other members of the group.

The difference between both subspecies is the texture of the leaves. In subspecies *hymenopatha* they are narrow, only up to 4-9 mm wide, dark green above, with a silvery-white margin and very prominent silvery veins below. It occurs mostly in the south part of the Zagros Mountains.

The leaves of subspecies *leptoneura* are much broader, up to nearly 2 cm and without the prominent veins below. It is distributed in northwest Iran and eastern Iraq. The bract and bracteole are, in both subspecies, very different from those of the other members of the group, being very thin, soft, silvery transparent and much longer than in the other species.



Iris hymenopatha ssp. *leptoneura*

I grow all Junos in clay pots in the same conditions in an unheated greenhouse with the best ventilation. The soil mixture contains 2-part limestone grit, 1 part pumice, 1 part unwashed sharp sand, 1 part perlite or vermiculite and 1 part granulated clay.

During the summer the plants should be absolutely dry. Watering starts in late autumn.

Good feed is necessary during the growing period. I give a fertiliser with a high level of potash four to five times. (A watch must always be kept for aphids and virus infection.)

Propagating by seed is the best way, but sometimes it needs a long time because the seed germinates very irregularly. The seedlings are healthier in a mineral sowing substrate than in a humus rich substrate. Normally the seedlings start to flower after four years.



Iris stenophylla ssp.
allisonii Gundogmus,
SW Turkey

-photos by
[David Millward](#)

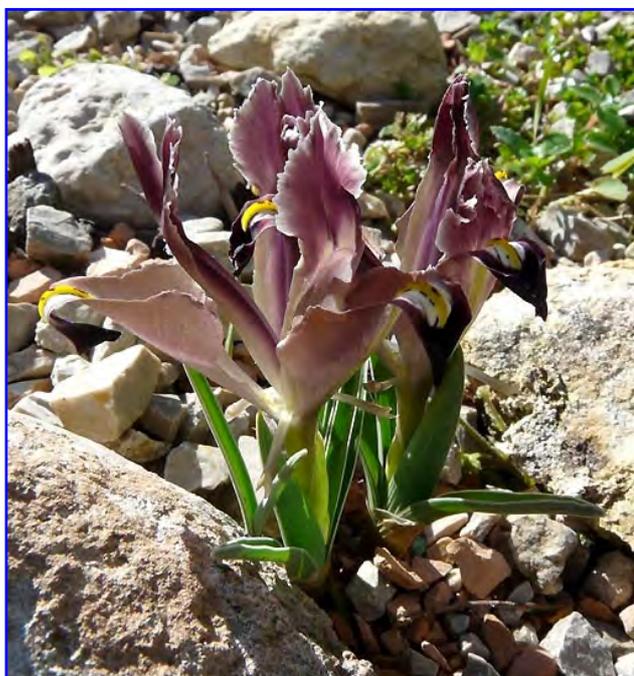
[geologist](#)
[and plantsman](#)



----International Rock Gardener----



Iris persica,
Iris stenophylla allisonii,
Iris planifolia and *Iris planifolia*
var. *alba* :
Juno Iris in the Mallorcan
garden of [Hans Achilles](#)



More of
Hans
Achilles'
iris....

left
Iris persica



right
Iris galatica



[Jim Archibald](#), Michael Kammerlander
and [Ian Young](#) : [IRGs raise a toast](#)

MICHAEL KAMMERLANDER began as a professional gardener at a young age and progressed to the Wurzburg Botanic Garden where he was the curator of the Rock Garden for many years. He developed the huge dry garden to accommodate new collection of warm loving plants. Crocus, Iris and other bulbs are one of his particular interests and he is the

keeper of the German National Fritillaria collection.

As an early master of Dionysia cultivation in the Alpine house he devised, based on his experience and observation, a valuable Registration system for hybrids of his own and those of others who receive his seeds thus providing strict order in part of the Dionysia world.

Since retiring he has had time to build a crevice garden and a new Alpine house for himself, similar to the [one he built for the Wurzburg Botanic Garden](#). He and his garden have been a Mecca for friends, serious rock gardeners, explorers and seed collectors from all over Europe with whom he generously and modestly shares his vast knowledge and experience. As in his other endeavours he is perfectionist in plant photography.

----International Rock Gardener----

----REPORT FROM BEAUTY SLOPE---

by Joyce Carruthers

We call our south facing garden in Karlík 'Beauty Slope' not because of personal vanity but because it was actually part of the local Benedictine domain (now St. John of the Red Star) from the 13th century which they named Beauty Slope. The long ridge was clothed with an interesting flora of *Quercus petraea*, hornbeam, *Cornus mas* and *Pinus sylvestris* with nice understory vegetation, so you can imagine why they chose the name.

Our centre of operations was their dolerite quarry, which dates from the same period and the remaining lower southern part of the ridge was later set out as a vineyard by the monks. From 1947 our house was used as a weekend summer house. In 1969 Zdeněk constructed a rock garden, which was visited by foreigners and members of different Czech Rock garden clubs. Unfortunately Beauty slope languished, lapsing into a ten-year slump. Even then it was lovely when lit by fireflies at night.



When I arrived on the scene I noticed that *Genista horrida*, *G. subcapitata* and *G. sericea*, *Cytisus ardoinii*, *C. x beanii* as well as a bonsai "look alike" *Eriogonum thymoides* (later trampled to death by a worker) and some bulbs had survived with less than no attention. This whetted my interest so I began to regularly weed the area before broadcast sowing five or six packets of *Dianthus x allwoodii alpinus* seeds. Not only would they suppress weeds but also they could maintain themselves in an ideal environment. Furthermore they would be almost 100% cushions of various sizes with attractive variations in leaf and flower colour and markings. Selection could come along later. Cushion plants were then "the order of the day" but *D. x allwoodii alpinus* did not "cut the mustard" alpinewise. Undaunted (as I was working for the long term), when leaving to Canada a few years later, and facing the slope, I informed Zdeněk and Luděk his brother that I

EXPECTED to see that something had happened here by the time I returned. Lo and behold when I got back there was the beginning of the Beauty Slope crevice garden.

Our burgundy coloured, small, nodding *Pulsatilla pratensis* subs. *bohemica* (syn. subsp. *nigricans*), are modest in their attractiveness. In the wild they grow on the warm dolomite margins of forest and rocky outcrops along with *Dianthus carthusianorum*, *Potentilla arenaria* and

jovibarbas. We love the earlier more exotic blue mauve flowers of *Pulsatilla grandis* with the exquisite indumentum, even lovelier with early morning pearls of water. These are grown from seed of the small population on rotten granite outcrops in Moravia, the most westerly limit of the species. One can imagine the former splendour of this population near margins of the pine forest, now with only two of the long parallel outcrops with pulsatillas, in a sea of ploughed land looking very much like a classic Japanese painting. That connoisseur of plants, Fritz Kummert gave me two *Pulsatilla grandis f. albiflora* of Styrian origin for my steppe. I perhaps made a mistake planting one on the northeast-facing slope where it is not as happy as the one on the warmer steppe facing south. Furthermore, its solitary bloom, too juicy to resist, was eaten by a deer.



----International Rock Gardener----

Pulsatilla grandis f. albiflora

This part of the Czech Karst has fostered many well-known gardeners and Saxifraga breeders, particularly Porophyllums (now Porphyryons). In the 1930's Mrs. Stivínová of *Sax. ferdinandi-coburgii* 'Dracula' fame had a nursery across the valley with a northern, cool, humid atmosphere. She was in close contact with the Sündermann nursery in Germany and with Walter Ingwersen in England. Stivínová was famous for her innovative method of shipping her saxifraga orders established in tufa lumps.

František Holenka is a modern breeder who has produced over 50 hybrids- 'Golden Prague', 'Galaxy' and 'Karel Čapek' are well known. Miroslav Kraus also from Prague produced the romantic yellow 'Thalia' and many others. More modern breeders include Karel Lang who recently won the "Sergio Bacci Cup" of the Saxifraga Society for 'Evening Star', one of his innumerable hybrids from a scientifically controlled breeding programme.



The author Jaroslav Horný grew alpines near Karlštejn castle, as does his son Dr. Radvan Horný who wrote the famous Monograph of the Section Porophyllum.

One of his lovely hybrids is **S. x 'Lenka'**.

We have had a ten-year trial growing some of these hybrids outdoors in north facing crevices. We have discovered that most of the older cultivars (up to 1970's) can withstand our conditions without shading or artificial watering if we are away in the summer (which we do not practice anyway). *Saxifraga x 'Lenka'* is one of these heroes.



Jan Burgel who uses *Sax. poluniniana* as the major parent of his projects has an unusual naming method for his attractive hybrids, which can grow quickly but are not long lived. (One can propagate)

In our garden after white *Saxifraga burseriana* and soft yellow *S. x boydii* we have the pleasure of the golden sun of **Adonis vernalis**, arguably one of the rarest and most valuable steppe plants. Its best position is in a sunny crevice.

In the wild many were ploughed under during the international communist food shortage but some survived along the margins of fields in the protection of blackthorn and hawthorn of the Czech Karst. In more rocky areas of the dolomite limestone it grows in the open with *Stipa joannis*.

Adonis vernalis

----International Rock Gardener----

Bohemian Apocryfa from ZZ

I informed in February Issue about unorthodox method of Fritz Kummert (using bat guano for fertilising).... now some other horticultural secrets.....

Jaroslav Baláž is successful with true alpines because his garden is built in an area with high content of uranium (there are mines for uranium in his village Dolní Rožínka.

The last example of Eastern Europe innovative methods is using home-tamed frogs to clean *Dionysia* from hostile sucking insect (from green flies to red spiders). Notice, that the good photographer Vlastimil Braun washed all the actors before his portrait was shot.



Vlastimil Braun from Czech Moravian Highland has a tamed frog in his employ

The [Rock Garden Plant Shows of Prague](#) are from one week up to three weeks long and run always out of doors.

One afternoon I saw there a visitor pollinating *Dionysia tapetodes* without asking for permission.
Another country -another habit-

His cousin already visited the violas on page ten!

You are welcome to post comments on IRG in the [SRGC Forum](#)

