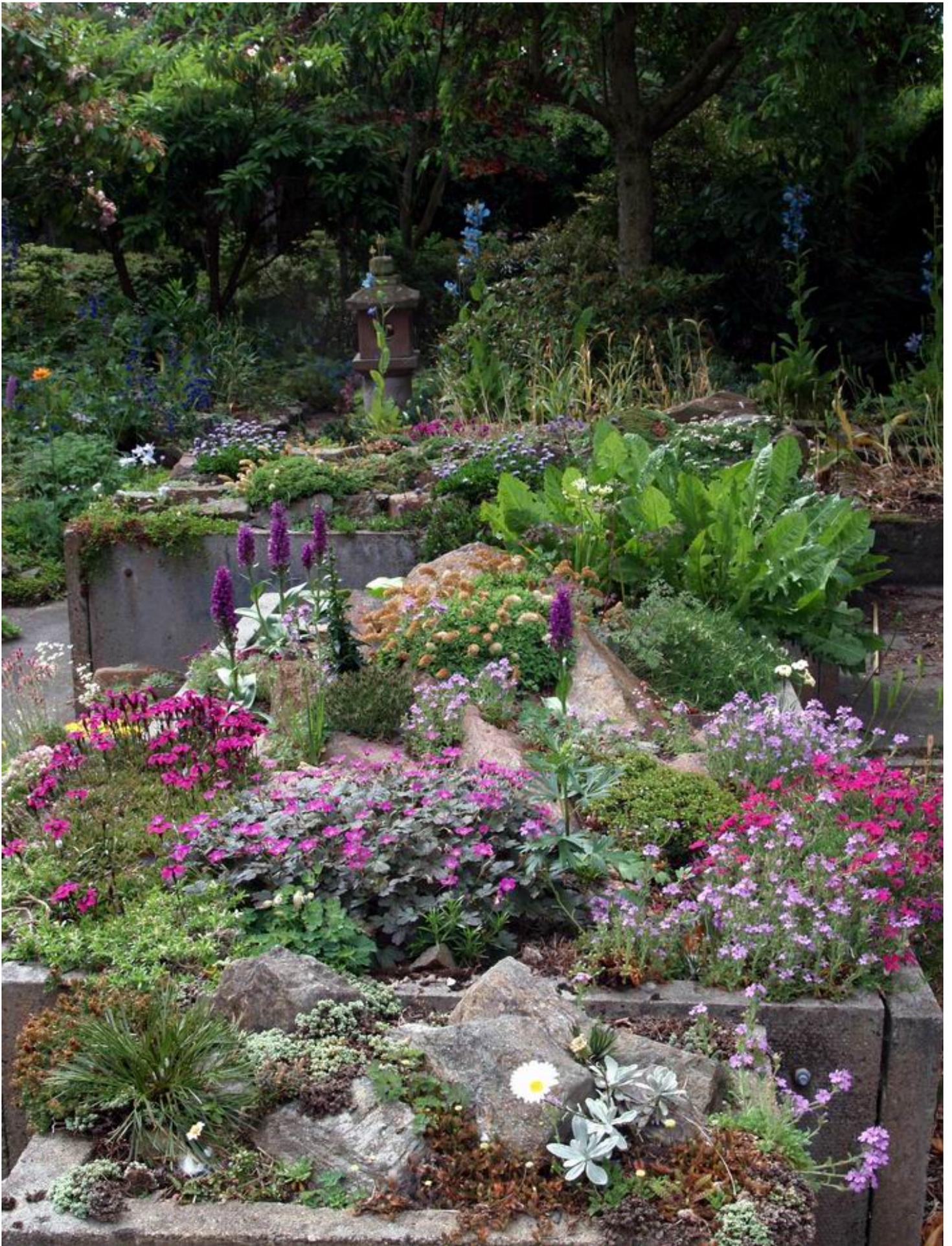


# International Rock Gardener



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

July 2010



This month we again depart from our usual format of IRG to focus on more of the Speakers of the [“Alpines without Frontiers”](#) Conference of April 2011.

This conference is directed at all lovers of alpine plants, whether new or experienced gardeners, amateur or professional. There is such a wide passion for this type of plant that these international conferences are very productive meetings for all those who attend; each person bringing their own particular area of interest to an arena tailored for the exchange of knowledge and opinion.

To qualify for the [“Early Bird Discount” for the event](#) booking must be made/ paid in full before the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2010. We hope that our concentration on the event at this time will serve to bring both the [attractions of the conference](#) and the benefits of early booking to the attention of the IRG readership.



Cover picture: The world in a garden: a part of the garden of Ian and Margaret Young in Aberdeen, North East Scotland, showing plants from many countries growing in harmony

[Alpines 2011 “Alpines without Frontiers” – further introductions by Margaret Young to the Speakers invited to address the Conference](#)

**Ian Young** is an artist, photographer and plantsman. Every week since January 2003 Ian has written for the SRGC website a [Bulb Log Diary](#) which, with its record of Ian’s methods and musings, fully illustrated, is eagerly anticipated and read by many thousands of people each week.

Ian has concentrated his attention on studying bulb cultivation for nearly 20 years now but not to the exclusion of other plants. He does grow a great many bulbs both in the garden and in pots under glass. In 2010 he established with Margaret Young and Zdeněk Zvolánek as co-editors, [this online magazine](#) to encourage further interaction

in the wide international fellowship of the alpine plant world. A regular contributor for ‘The Rock Garden’ the twice yearly journal of the Scottish Rock Garden Club, he has also written for ‘The Alpine Gardener’ as well as other gardening magazines. His plant photographs have been widely published, especially in educational literature. Ian is a popular speaker and lectures in the UK, Europe, Scandinavia, New Zealand, Canada and the USA and is a regular broadcaster on BBC Radio Scotland.

He has been on the SRGC Council since 1989, serving as President from 2000 to 2003 and is a member of the SRGC contingent of the RHS Rock Garden Plant Committee. Since 2003 Ian has lead the development of the SRGC internet presence and been Chairman of the web site.

In 2007 he and his wife Margaret were honoured to be (jointly) awarded the Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother Medal by the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society for outstanding service to Scottish horticulture. Ian was awarded the SRGC Golden Jubilee Salver in 2008 for outstanding service to the SRGC.



An accomplished artist and sculptor, Ian has had a number of successful solo and group exhibitions and has work in many public as well as private collections. He has always had a great love of music but nowadays his time for music is limited to some guitar playing as he formulates his next project in the garden.

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**Martin Walsh** lives and works in Dublin, Ireland: he is a graduate of the [National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin](#) and set up his own business as a garden designer and consultant nearly twenty years ago.

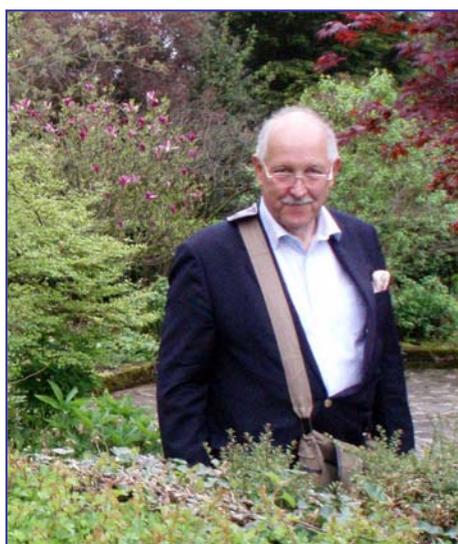
As a student in Colorado Martin first saw alpinists in the Rocky Mountains then an Alpine Garden Society exhibit at Chelsea in 1996 widened his interest and so began his membership of the AGS. He has become a hardworking member of the AGS Dublin Group. Martin developed a deep interest in Asian plants and since taking part in his first expedition to Yunnan in China in 1998 he has participated in numerous trips, especially to the Himalaya, but also to other mountain regions including the Drakensberg Mountains, the Tien Shan, and the Pontic Alps. As a freelancer who designs new gardens and improves established ones Martin was keen to see natural plant associations in the wild.

Martin has been fortunate to be the recipient of various grants to assist his explorations, including two to China and one to Kyrgyzstan from [the Merlin Trust](#) and has been twice awarded a [Brickell](#) prize for Merlin Trust scholars for his expedition reports.

In November 2010 Martin will be one of the Speakers along with Christine Skelmersdale and Zdenek Zvolánek at the [27th Alpine Weekend, held by the Irish AGS in Termonfeckin](#).

Martin has just been on his eighth trip to the Himalayas, to Bhutan, with the help of a grant from the SRGC Exploration Fund, to further his studies into the area explored by Frank Ludlow in 1949.

While Martin seems at first to be a very quiet man, this demeanour hides a wicked sense of humour so his talk at Alpines 2011 which will consider some of the higher elevation plants from the Himalayas will surely be enlivened by this side of his personality.



**John E.G. Good OBE** is a plant ecologist with special interests in alpine and woodland habitats and species. Dr Good, a plantsman and author is well known for his books 'Alpine Gardening for Beginners' and the 'Handbook of Rock Gardening' and most recently for ['Alpine Plants: Ecology for Gardeners'](#) ISBN 07134 9017 9 co-authored with geologist and alpine enthusiast, Dr David Millward.

The book was hailed for its success in bringing broad subjects concisely and clearly into focus for gardeners and this approach is a hallmark of John's lectures.

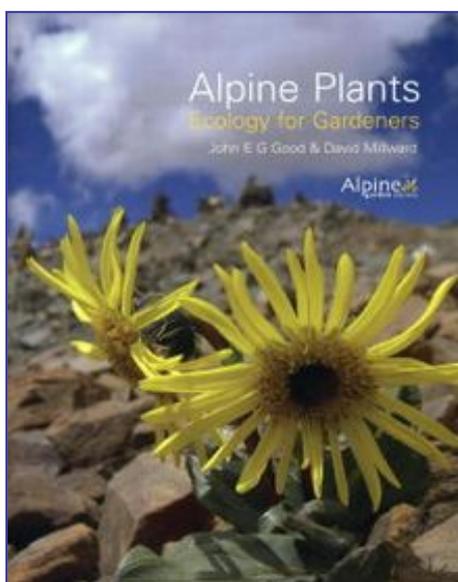
John is an AGS representative on the Rock Garden Committee of the Royal Horticultural Society, Honorary Director of Publications for the AGS and a Show Judge.

John's skills are not merely theoretical: I well remember that John won the premier award at Alpines 1991 for a glorious pot of *Rhodothamnus chamaecistus*.

John and his wife Pam had made six gardens in the UK before the year 2000: they have lived in England, Scotland and now Wales, where John is the Chairman and founder of the North Wales AGS group.

Speculation is rife in the IRG Team that all that remains for the Goods to "complete the set" is for them to make a garden in Ireland! Small world that this is, John has worked with ZZ of the IRG Team on a crevice garden.

You will see that John has considerable experience from his garden making activity alone, never mind his long observations of the plant world, to recommend him as a Speaker.



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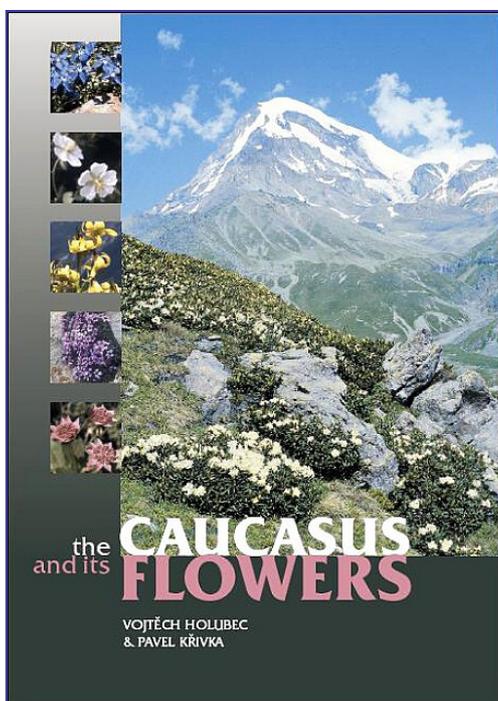


Dr. **Vojtěch Holubec**, an agronomist with the Czech Gene Bank, is one of the leading internationalists of a vibrant 'Bohemian' rock garden community.

The First Czech International Conference, held in 2007, which was sponsored by the Prague Rock Garden Club with the direction of Vojtěch and Zdeněk Zvolánek, was a terrific chance for the assembled company to see why it is that these Czech folk are recognised as being the acknowledged masters of modern rock gardening.

As well as his service as the President of the

[Rock Garden Club of Prague](#), a group formed in 1970 and now with around ten percent of its members from outside the country, Vojtěch has been much involved in the extraordinary outdoor exhibitions that are staged several times a year.

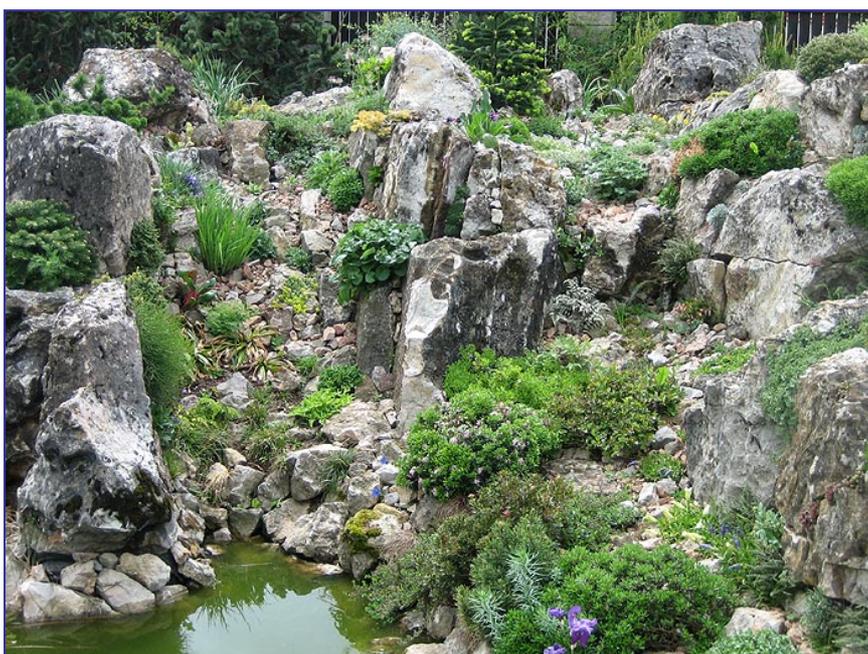


A consummate grower of alpines, a [seed collector](#) who has introduced such lovely plants as [Saxifraga dinniki](#), and a botanist with a detailed knowledge of the flora of the Caucasus, Vojtěch co-wrote, with Pavel Krivka, 'The Caucasus and its Flowers' (ISBN 80-902541-3-6 published in Prague, 2006). This long awaited book was given some financial support by various organisations, so we can see the [international esteem](#) in which Vojtěch's project was held.

This book was not Vojtěch's first offering: in 1992 in 'Skalyky a Jejich Stavba' – 'Rock Gardens and their Construction' he wrote, most tellingly : "Tired of the pace of today's civilization, we are turning to Nature in all its forms, often without realizing it. The cultivation of alpine plants is one of these returns."

below: Holubec garden

photo [Mark Smyth](#)

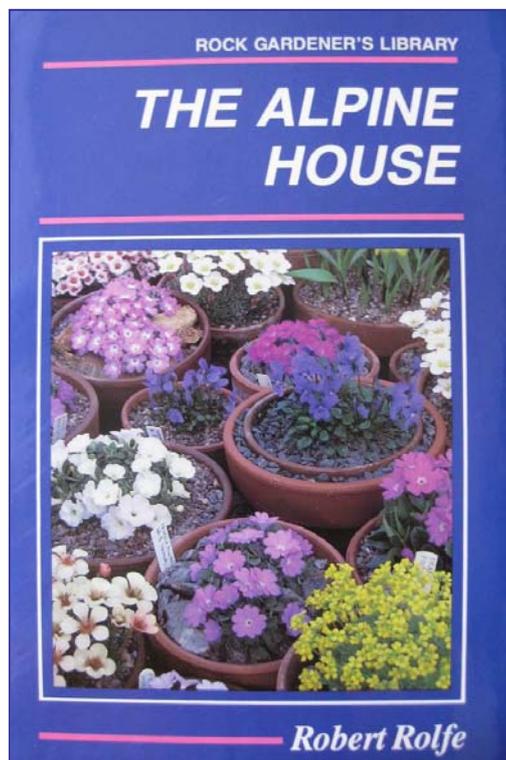


In 1929 the Czech playwright Karel Čapek wrote in 'The Gardener's Year': "Let no one think that real gardening is a bucolic and meditative occupation. It is an insatiable passion, like everything else to which a man gives his heart."

It seems that these Czech gardeners have long appreciated the value of our chosen activity. Lest we begin to think ourselves too important, we must remember that Čapek also wrote that "the cultivator of a rock garden is not only a gardener, but a collector as well, and that puts him among the serious maniacs."

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I think anyone with any knowledge of the Alpine Garden Society must be aware of **Robert Rolfe**. Robert, apparently vaccinated as a babe in arms by a gramophone needle filled with the contents of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is truly a remarkable person. His rapid rate of speech, pouring out facts on a plant, from its early collection history, through everyone who ever grew it, had a show success or found it and photographed in on the left side of just that very mountain in that country on a rainy day in May 1879, is the stuff of legend in the UK and beyond!



Robert has written two books 'The alpine house: its plants and purposes' ISBN: 0713680741 in 1990 and 'Portraits of Alpine Plants' published in 2010 as a replacement for the popular and long out-of-print volume with the same title, by Roy Elliot.

There is more to Robert than that, of course.... so much more. Let's begin with his connections to 'the Alpine Garden', the bulletin of the AGS. He has been the bulletin's Anthologist; he writes the plant reports on awards from the RHS Rock Garden Plant Committee ("Joint Rock") of which he is a member; compiles and edits show reports; writes many articles; takes photographs; acts as assistant editor....I don't think he has actually manually printed the pages, though that would not surprise me. His AGS activities extend much further, as befits a recipient of the Lyttle Trophy and of particular note are his exploits as a Show exhibitor. Robert brings his plants to Shows by public transport, managing extremely unlikely journeys by train with fabulous pots which always seem to survive the vagaries of the rail system; both plants and Robert arriving at the venue looking smart: it is

Robert who wears the designer suits; the plants come au naturel. While he has won numerous Farrer medals and enjoyed considerable show successes, Robert is more focussed on displaying plants that are new or particularly interesting than merely prize-winning specimens. He even finds time to work a little on hybridizing plants; hold down a "day job" quite outside the plant world and also contribute editing services for Kew Books!

Travelling far and wide, often for very brief intense visits at short notice, to see plants in the wild, Robert has achieved results from his trips that often bemuse the rest of us as he contrives on the one hand to introduce seed of some new find and also astound us with his exploits in completing lightning trips in Turkey after breaking an ankle.



Robert with his Farrer medal winning pot of *Draba ossetica* picture by Cliff Booker, East Lancashire group AGS



Robert's Farrer Medal pan of *Crocus dalmatica* picture by Luc Gilgemyn of Belgium

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Robert Rolfe tells us about a plant which he enjoys seeing in the wild and growing in his garden: *Primula vulgaris* and a variant, *P. vulgaris* subsp. *sibthorpii*

In the British Isles, the primrose (*Primula vulgaris*) is overwhelmingly, more or less diagnostically, primrose-yellow in colour. Even so, a few selected populations exhibit other variants, usually as an extremely small percentage of the overall representation. Exceptionally, in Pembrokeshire, it has been estimated that up to 60% of some stands are 'purplish to liver-coloured'; these have been segregated as var. *purpurea* Maulny. This part of Wales is also home to almost reddish examples, and white ones too, along with isolated double yellows. Differently-coloured examples have also been reported from further north, though not all are true natives: Jim Jermyn lives close to an East Lothian clustering, gathered in a hazel thicket over the course of a few hundred metres, where pink, yellow and (rarely) white morphs of *P. vulgaris* subsp. *sibthorpii* intermix. These are garden escapes, or else deliberate plantings, in the manner of Joe Elliott's (in)famous Cotswold roadcut sowing of non-indigenous, soon 'at home' alpine importees, which caused some British botanists to beat their chests in fury. 'That's why I did it', he retorted.



I have a particular fondness for white primroses, and have witnessed them growing wild in Greece and Turkey, beyond which I've enjoyed their displays (sourced from various parts of southern Europe, through to the very easternmost areas of the Mediterranean seaboard), in a variety of English gardens. They can be allotted to several subspecific allegiances, from subsp. *balearica* in the far west through to subsp. *heterochroma* in Iran and Azerbaijan. The most polymorphic of them all, however, is subsp. *sibthorpii*, distributed from mainland Greece eastwards to the Caucasus, and often at lower altitudes than the yellowish subsp. *vulgaris*, which covers whole turfey hillsides in NE Turkey, flowering as late as June. My stocks of the former derive from a non-specified Lebanese gathering (relatively lowland, I suspect, but indefatigably hardy) that has settled down well in a number of gardens.

*P. vulgaris* subsp. *sibthorpii* typically awakens much earlier, both at home and in the garden, where it exhibits surely the widest colour range of any primrose permutation, presenting a splendid display before neighbouring plantings have awoken. Sometimes before Christmas, and if not, then in all but

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the worst winters straight afterwards, the first flowers appear. A few will be curiously frilled, but these too are welcome nonetheless, if only as a portent of what is to come. Full production starts with the first mild spell in February, reaching a peak, on average, in early to mid March, when an individual clump can produce well over 50 flowers.

Although I was handed half a dozen clumps to begin with, these were probably all divisions of a single plant. In the 20 years since then just one seedling (mauvish-pink flowered) has appeared: a bee must have first visited the violet-purple bloomed patch of the same subspecies that I have long grown on the other side of the house. No matter, for numbers have been increased easily by further division of the multi-crowned plants every second or third year. The optimum time to conduct this strategy is late March or early April, when the majority of the flowers are spent, and the bright apple green flush of new leaves is newly apparent. Even the smallest, almost rootless fragments, broken off by accident as the unearthed plant is pulled apart, will root if dibbed firmly into kitchen garden type, freshly-worked and enriched soil, then watered regularly. They will, nine times out of ten, re-establish in just a few weeks. Parched conditions and drying winds are far and away the chief causes of failure.

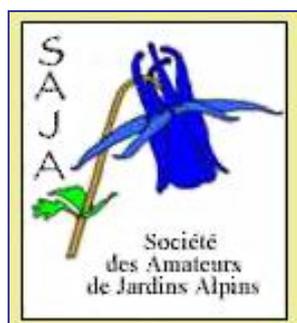
The relative cool provided by my north-facing front garden is much to the Lebanese primrose's taste. Even so, it is obligatory to go round with a watering can throughout the summer, whenever a week or so passes without rainfall. Some plants nestle beneath a 20 year old *Corylopsis pauciflora*, and the combination is highly effective since both peak around the same time. But although shade-tolerant, outright competition is resented; a lusty *Geranium psilostemon* that enjoyed the conditions proved rather too enthusiastic and had to be ousted. As so often in gardening, it's all a question of balance.

R.R.

Examples of the variation in these charming primulas are shown here by Tony Willis with, below left, *Primula vulgaris* a form from Zigana in Turkey and below right a lilac form of *Primula vulgaris ssp. sibthorpii* from Iznic, Turkey.



## ----Alpine Flowers used as Club Emblems----



The diminutive species of *Aquilegia* are among the most charming of their kind and it is very rewarding to grow these tiny "Granny's Bonnets" in our rock gardens. The [French Alpine Society, SAJA](#), formed in 1951, has as its emblem one of the dwarf columbines from the mountains of Europe, *A alpina*, pictured right by Paddy Tobin, Ireland.

Another alpine aquilegia, this time *A. saximontana*, is also the favoured plant of the [Rocky Mountain Chapter](#) of the North American Rock Garden Society.



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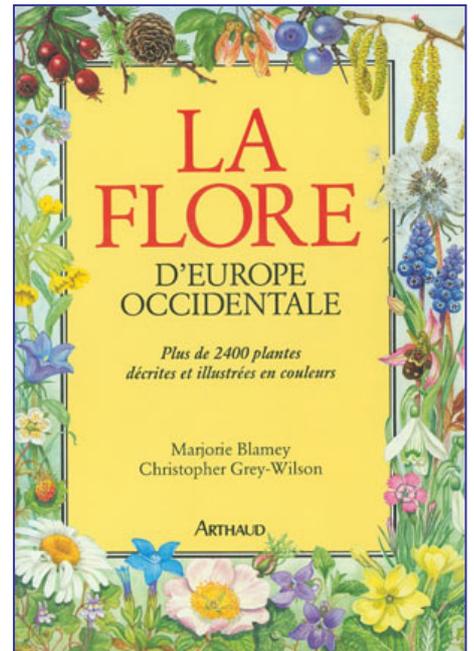
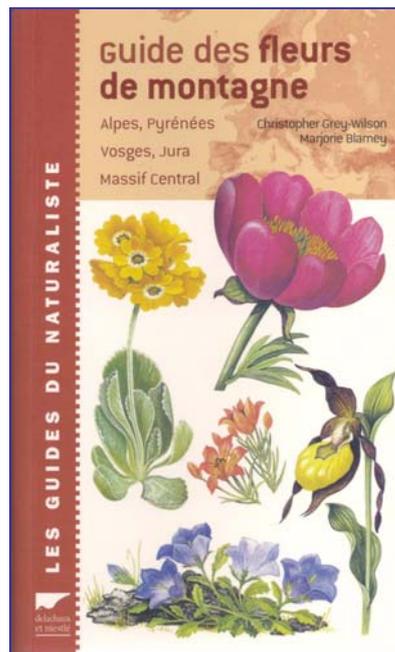


This plant is also the State Flower of Colorado.

Aquilegias are found at higher altitudes throughout the Northern Hemisphere growing in open meadows and woodlands. It is a genus of about 70 species of herbaceous perennial plants with some very beautiful, choice species that will challenge many alpine gardeners. *A. saximontana*, a native of the Rocky Mountains of Colorado, grows little more than 10 cms high. It is easier to grow than some and is a charming alpine plant worthy of a place in any rock garden.



left: *Aquilegia saximontana*



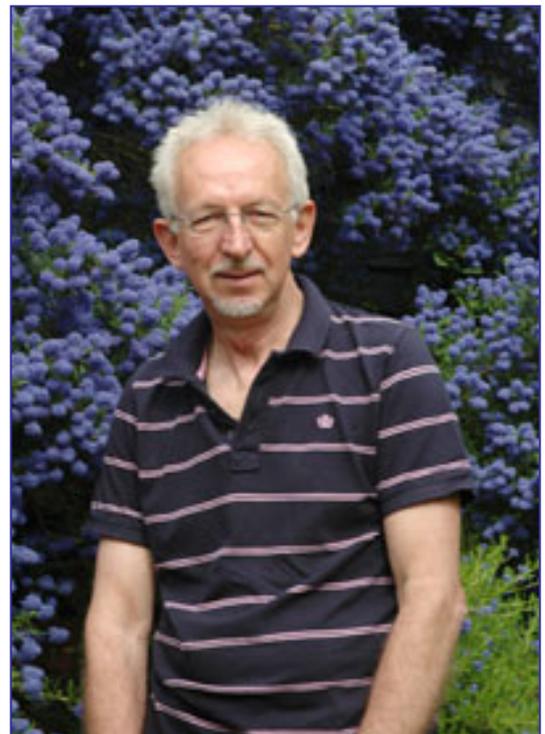
Right and far right:  
In their French editions; the covers of two of Chris Grey Wilson's early books with Marjorie Blamey.

**Christopher Grey-Wilson**, affectionately known as 'Kit', has had his service to the Royal Horticultural Society recognised by the award of a gold Veitch Memorial Medal and the prestigious Victoria Medal of Honour.

Kit is a leading field botanist and prolific author who was a Principal Scientific Officer at Kew and has served as the editor of the Kew Magazine and Curtis' Botanical Magazine and continues, now as a Freelance, to have many connections with RHS committees.

His travels, plant discoveries and work as a tour leader are the source of material for all his work whether as author, photographer or speaker and he remains busy on various taxonomic revisions.

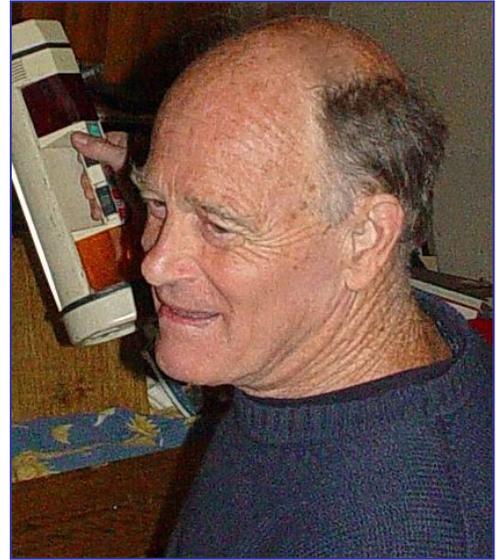
Kit's contribution to the Alpine Garden Society over the years has been more than notable. He has designed numerous successful displays at the Chelsea Flower Show and has been editor of the Society's bulletin since 1990, a post he will vacate after the 2011 Conference.



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How am I to introduce this unique personality; **John Watson**? I'll begin with a description of the man: he is a wiry sturdy fellow, driven by what is, it seems, an extraordinary engine powered by some mysterious gadget generating perpetual motion. He cannot sit still, unless briefly over a good meal: he is in constantly on the move, rushing around, whether in travel around the world as one of the most successful plant hunters and seed collectors of our time or to complete writing commissions. John is not a man for whom deadlines are a welcome distraction....his life is just too full for all he needs or wants to do!

I suppose *irrepressible* is the best word to describe him! Neither ill health nor earthquakes can put a stop to his continuing whirl of activity and in this he is ably supported by his wife, a Chilean botanist, Anita Flores.



After early work with some nurseries, John took an RHS course at Wisley and first began 'Watson's Seeds' in 1962. He has taken part in many botanical expeditions since then in Western Asia: Lebanon, Turkey; temperate South America: Argentina and Chile. He has had as his associates on these trips such botanists as Sydney Albury, Ken Beckett, C.P. von Bohlen, Martin Cheese, Tony Mitchell as well as the Canadian James Macphail and Anita Flores.

John made his first trip to the Andes in 1971, a six month-long trip, the record of which was published in a fifteen part series over four years.

Of late John and Anita have concentrated their work in South America and so are more known for this connection nowadays but John has been responsible over nearly forty years for numerous notable plant introductions from his travels. One of these is *Asperula sintenisii* ssp. *puberula* from Turkey, a plant which has been granted an Award of Garden Merit from the RHS and is often seen on the show benches.



*Asperula sintenisii* ssp. *puberula* growing well in the Czech garden of [Zdenek Rehacek](#)

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A photo by John Watson from the Rahue Pass. He says “You will find *Oxalis adenophylla* much more floriferous, but never more exquisitely bejewelled.”

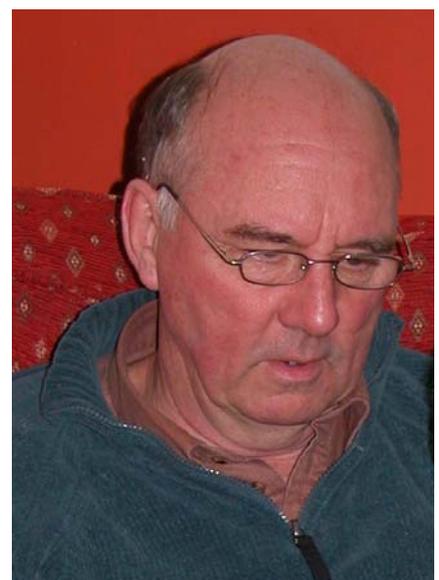
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**John Richards** had an early enthusiasm for natural history, with a bias to classification and this has carried on through his studies and professional life and his private passion for plants. The author of several standard works of university study, he is best known to alpinists for his indispensable book “**Primula**”. This book (ISBN 0713487283) describes 430 species and is designed to be used by both gardeners and botanists. Ably illustrated by Brigid Edwards, it was published by Batsford Ltd and fully revised for a second edition in 2002.



*Primula elatior ssp pseudoelatior*

The photo, above, of one of John’s excellent show plants, which won the [John Saxton](#) Memorial Award for the best plant native to Europe in the AGS Chesterfield show 2010, was taken by George Young, another of the keen and successful exhibitors from John Richards’ local Northumberland Group.



John – photo by his wife Sheila

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John was fortunate to have his youthful interest fostered by family, teachers and lecturers, including David Bellamy, whose introduction of John to a fascination with mountain flowers has been of tremendous benefit not only to John but to those with whom he shares his love of plants – particularly the AGS where John has served in so many capacities. This association began in the 1960s when he joined the Oxford Group of the AGS and was encouraged by the likes of Primrose Warburg, Valerie Finnis and Muriel Hodgman and built his first rock garden with his wife and willing co-gardener, Sheila.



They moved to Newcastle in 1970, joined the local AGS and the SRGC and went on to make three gardens in Hexham – the most recent garden being well-documented in the [Northumberland Garden Diary for the AGS website](#). John became Professor of Botany for Newcastle University in 2002 and is now retired. Since their three children have grown up the Richards have had time for more travel - to botanise or on speaking tours.

John has visited Greece nearly forty times, often leading tours, including the AGS seed collecting MESE expedition in 1999. He has also travelled widely to the mountains of Europe, New Zealand, Australia, China, the USA, South Africa, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Many of these travels have resulted in articles for the AGS bulletin and popular talks.

John enjoys exhibiting at AGS and SRGC shows and has had considerable success. Among his many AGS “hats” are those of Judge, Council member, Member of the RHS Plant Committee, Tours Committee member, local Group official and, of course, as President.

John tells IRG :  
“The title of my talk for Alpines 2011 is 'something old, something new in Asiatic Primulas' and for something old I would like to show the wonderful ***Primula chumbiensis***, (above left: photo by David and Margaret Thorne) refound recently in the wild but not yet reintroduced into cultivation and for something new; ***Primula rebecca***, (left) which I described new to science a few years back. Both come from the same part of north-west Bhutan. It too has not yet entered cultivation.



*Primula rebecca*

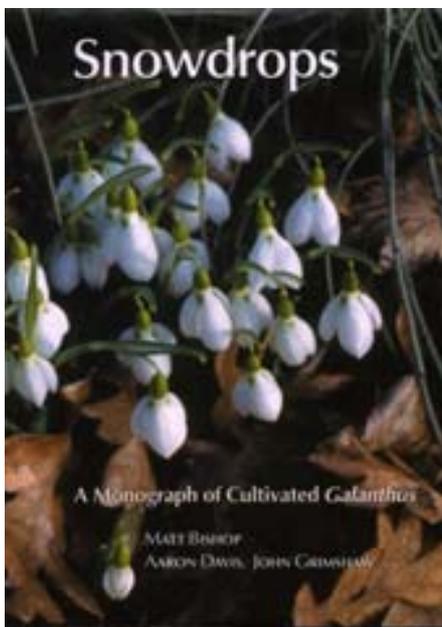
photo by Tim Lever

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**John Grimshaw** turned an early penchant for gardening and botany into his degree subjects at Oxford University, gaining a first in botany and a doctorate in African Forest Ecology. Happy to grow anything (though preferably not rhododendrons if it can be avoided!) John's main botanical interest lies in African plants. His fervour for discovering the origins of garden plants is the motive for his travels and provided the subject of his first book, "The Gardner's Atlas" in 1998.

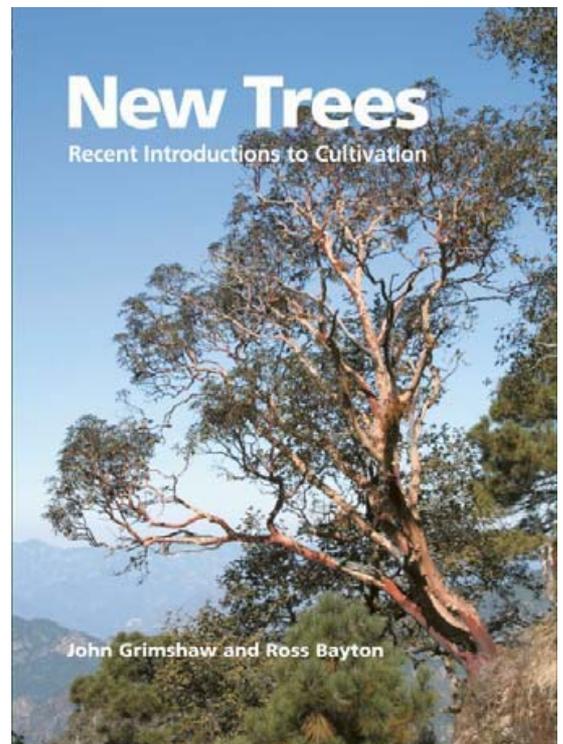
John has worked in the Netherlands on perennials for the seed trade and is now garden manager at [Colesbourn Park](#), Gloucestershire – this includes responsibility for the famous Elwes Galanthus collection – surely a happy position for a man who co-authored the "Snowdrops" monograph with Matt Bishop and Aaron Davis in 2002 ?



In 2009 the fruit of five years work on the tree species introductions of the last 35 years was published by John and Ross Bayton as "New Trees, Recent Introductions to Cultivation".

John is almost certainly the only honorary elder of the Masai community of Lerang'wa, Tanzania, to be a member of the Royal Horticultural

Society's Advisory Committees on Nomenclature and Taxonomy and Woody Plants.



At Alpines 2011 we will also hear from **Bob Wallis**, who will talk on one of his plant specialities: "Fritillaries on Four Continents". In his lecture, Bob will concentrate on habitat, ecology, climate and natural co-habitants rather than the details of botany of this popular genus. The talk will be illustrated, largely, by pictures taken in the wild.

Bob trained as a biochemist and spent most of his career in pharmaceutical and biotechnology research in the private sector. He is now retired and devotes most of his attention to his and his wife, Rannveig's, large garden and plant collection in Carmarthenshire, where they have amassed one of the most comprehensive collections of bulbs in private hands and this includes the majority of the known species of *Fritillaria*.

In 2007 Bob and Rannveig Wallis were awarded the Lyttel



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Trophy; the premier award of the AGS to those who have made an outstanding contribution to the world of alpine plants. Bob and Rannveig have, over many years, grown a huge range of bulbous plants to a consistently high standard and have contributed through their field studies to wider knowledge on many species.

They have garnered their expertise and plants long unseen or even new to science, by extensive travels in NW America, the eastern Mediterranean and Iran and have also been Tour Leaders to these destinations.

They have written and lectured on these travels and their discoveries, many of which are distributed through Rannveig's nursery in Wales.



The photos of Bob and Rannveig, with a fine pot of

*Fritillaria aff. bithynica* which was awarded the Farrer Medal in 2010 at an AGS Show and the close up of that plant, were both taken at the Chesterfield Show by Cliff Booker.

**Michael Kammerlander** has been introduced to IRG readers in a previous issue. Now retired from his post as Curator of the [Wurzburg Botanic Garden](#) in Germany he has more time for his own garden and plants, such as the bulbs that are a special interest (He holds a German National Collection of Fritillaries) along with Dionysias, the hybrids of which he has had such influence in breeding.

In his own alpine house he has an impressive Tufa cliff, colonised with all sorts of rare plants.

Michael is a modest man of quiet charm with tremendous knowledge and experience and he is always willing to meet visitors who wish to learn from this master grower. It seems appropriate to repeat here this photo of Michael (centre) with Jim Archibald (left) and Ian Young (right): three of the scheduled speakers for Alpines 2011.

One of Michael's best Dionysia hybrids has been named for Kit Grey-Wilson who, with Professor Hewer, was one of the pioneer collectors of the genus in Afghanistan.



*Dionysia* 'Chris Grey Wilson' is from the cross *D. freitagii* x *viscidula*.

The plant is featured in the AGS bulletin Volume 68, No. 4 of 2000, in the Plant Awards section written by Pat Nichols whose plant was awarded a Preliminary Commendation by the RHS 'Joint Rock Committee'.

For Alpines 2011 Michael will share with us his superb photographs and will talk on Juno Iris. Coincidentally it was "Subgenus Scorpiris the Juno Iris" which was the subject of his brief article in [IRG3 of March 2010](#).

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**Brian Mathew's** career with plants began as a student at the Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Wisley in 1960. He spent 25 years in the Herbarium at the RBG Kew as a botanist where his special field of study was petaloid monocots ('bulbous plants'). In spite of spending so many years with dried botanical specimens he has always retained a keen interest in living plants and attempts to grow a wide range in his garden in Surrey.

In 1993 he became Editor of the prestigious Curtis's Botanical Magazine, which at 220 years is the longest-running botanical periodical containing watercolour illustrations of plants. His 20 much-admired, must-have books include *The Iris* (1981), *The Genus Crocus* (1982), *Hellebores* (1989), *The Smaller Bulbs* (1987), *Growing Bulbs* (1997) and *Bulbs: The Four Seasons* (1998). He is now an Honorary Research Fellow of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.



Brian busy with his camera in Yunnan



Brian with his wife Margaret about to dine in China

Brian very much enjoyed his time at Wisley, not least for personal reasons: it was there he met the secretary to Chris Brickell, Margaret Briggs, who was later to become his wife and the mother of their son Paul. So Margaret became Margaret Mathew..... As Brian says, "Botanists are renowned for changing the names of all with which they come in contact!"

Brian gives Margaret full credit for having a great eye for spotting a distant plant in the wild: a very useful attribute!



Brian, as might be expected of one with such a depth of knowledge and the capacity to share it, has been given many awards: he is a recipient of the exalted VMH (RHS), an MBE (1995), the Lyttel Lily Cup (RHS), the Sir Michael Foster Award (British Iris Society), the Warburton Trophy (American Iris Society), the Lyttel Trophy (AGS), Carlton Worth Award (North American Rock Garden Society), Sir Michael Foster Award (British Iris Society), Herbert Memorial Medal (International Bulb Society), an OPTIMA Silver Medal (Organisation for the Promotion of Taxonomy in the Mediterranean Area), the Clarence Elliott Award (Alpine Garden Society) and is an Honorary Member of the Scottish Rock Garden Club.

From a recent visit to Vancouver Island, Brian recalls the thrill of seeing *Erythronium montanum* (left) where it was growing in drifts, appearing through the mist.

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



In 1963 Brian organised a five month plant hunting expedition to Iran, taking advantage of a Bowles Scholarship travel grant, named in honour of E.A. Bowles who, aptly, was an authority on the genus *Crocus*, as Brian has proved himself also to be.

Brian regards coming across ***Fritillaria***

***chloantha***, all those years ago on that BSBE trip to Iran as one of his most exciting 'finds'.

Brian's books and talks make him a highly respected and popular character regarded by many as one of the real "greats" of our plant world and his appearance as a Speaker on any programme is a cause for happy anticipation [on the part of his audience.](#)

**David Haslegrove** has created a 3.5 acre informal garden from an open field site on alkaline clay over the last 25 years.

This [lovely garden at Brent Pelham](#), open under the [National Gardens Scheme](#) and included in a pre Alpines2011 Tour, has much of interest to delight visitors.

There is a wide variety of trees and shrubs especially birches and oaks. There are charming spring displays of daffodils and tulips.

The garden sports bulb frames, raised beds with alpines and acid-loving plants and a small formal area with ponds.



above right: part of the Spring garden at Pelham House (photo from NGS website)

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



Not all of David's time is taken up by his garden: he practised as a solicitor in NE London for over 35 years and has travelled widely to Patagonia and Chile, South Africa, New Zealand, the USA, Turkey, Greece and has also made trips to Iran, China and Nepal.

David served the Alpine Garden Society for 25 years as Publications Manager, boosting sales and income to the point where publication of the AGS Encyclopaedia of Alpines was achieved. He has also been an AGS Group Secretary for 29 years and will shortly join the Council of the Royal Horticultural Society.

David's subject for Alpines 2011 will be "Southern Hemisphere Treats".

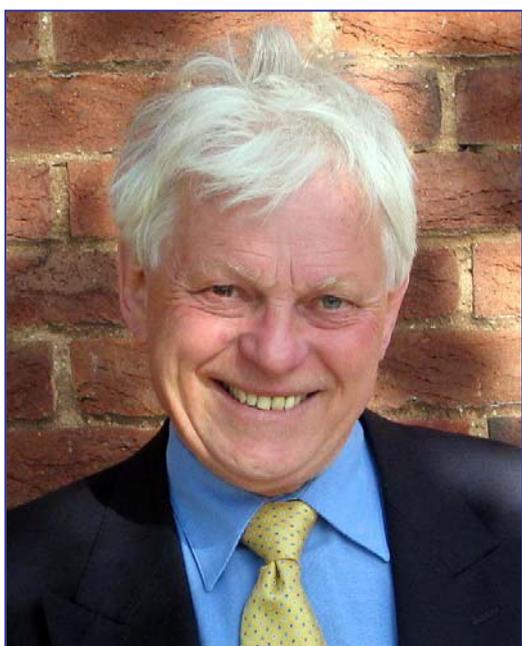
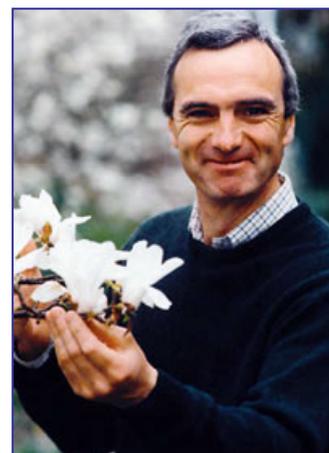


**Keith Wiley** is a celebrated horticulturalist and garden designer who was for twenty-five years head gardener/manager at the Garden House at Buckland Monochorum on the edge of Dartmoor in South Devon. The work he did there was hailed as being some of [the most original gardening being done in Britain](#). Keith espouses a method which seeks to grow plants with as natural a planting as possible, mirroring conditions found in their habitat, inspired by scenes he has witnessed of plants in the wild.

Keith contributes to various magazines and has written two books, "On the Wild Side" published by Timber Press and "Shade" published by Mitchell Beasley.

Keith and his artist wife, [Ros](#), have, from 2004, been making an exciting [new garden and nursery](#) of their own in Devon and earlier in 2010 a programme was shown in the UK on Channel 4 Television made as a result of a camera team following the Wileys through a whole year of work on this ambitious new project. Keith, who received a degree with honours in horticulture from London University, now works as a nurseryman and freelance horticultural consultant.

Keith will talk at the Conference on "An holistic approach to alpines in the garden".

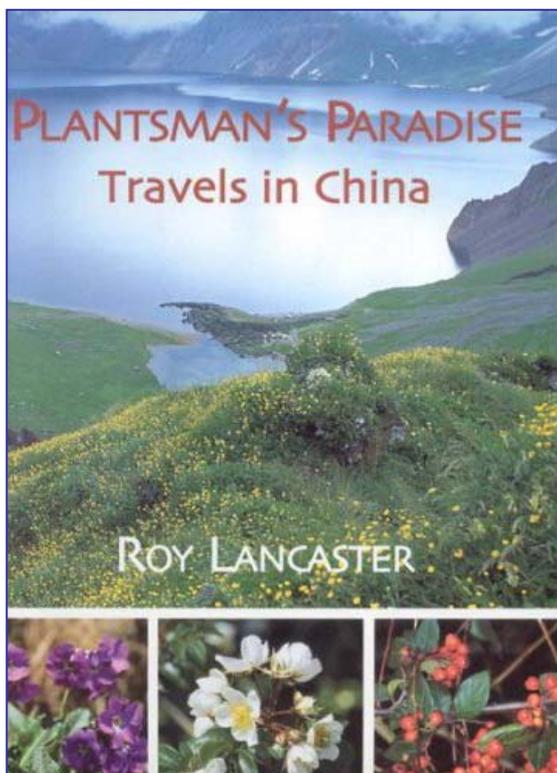


**Roy Lancaster** is probably the most well known and popular plantsman in the UK. His television work, whether for the BBC in their flagship programme, Gardeners' World or for many other programmes for BBC and other channels and his radio contributions have brought him very much to the public notice. His immense experience and obvious enthusiasm for his subject and the ease with which he imparts his knowledge meant he very soon became a favourite gardening broadcaster, held in both great esteem and fondness by his audience. While he is very busy as a freelance writer and lecturer, many of us regret that he is seen less often on our TV screens now than in past years.

A man with a long experience in all aspects of the plant world, from his career beginning in the Bolton Parks Department and various exciting projects over 18 years with Hillier and Sons of Winchester, becoming the first curator of the Hillier Arboretum, to his remarkable plant hunting expeditions

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

around the world and his work with the RHS, we are fortunate that Roy has been able to share his infectious passion for plants with such a wide audience through the broadcasting media and through his books and talks. Roy has written many books, all with handwritten manuscripts typed up by his wife Sue, including "A Plantsman in Nepal" and "Travels in China" which have been enjoyed by many more people than just dedicated growers, such is Roy's ability to express the pleasure and excitement of his travels.



Sue is acknowledged by Roy to be pretty much a superwoman, contributing so much to their great partnership - they are obviously a terrific team! From his boyhood interest in wildflowers, through his work at Hilliers with mainly woody subjects, Roy's plant interests are more than catholic and he has a great love of alpine plants and has served as President of the Hardy Plant Society.

Roy is a Fellow of the Institute of Horticulture and was one of the first recipients of the IoH Award for Outstanding Service to Horticulture.

Roy has been awarded both a Gold Veitch Memorial Medal and the illustrious Victoria Medal of Honour by the RHS and, in the New Year's Honours List of 1999, an OBE for outstanding services to horticulture.

It would be hard to think of anyone with a greater passion for plants combined with such a capacity to communicate that passion.

To add to his skills and astonishing knowledge, Roy is one of the kindest and most genuine people around, as generous with seeds and plants as he is with sound advice,

so you will understand my personal delight that the AGS has invited him to address the Conference in 2011 and the cheerful eagerness this has engendered in those planning to attend the event.

## ----Alpine Flowers used as Club Emblems----



As might be expected in a country with so many fine mountain flowers, there are a healthy number of alpine plant enthusiasts to populate, along with overseas members,

the [New Zealand Alpine Garden Society](#). These gardeners from the Southern



Hemisphere have hosted one of the "interim" International Conferences and their "home" conferences often feature international speakers and attract a wide audience who enjoy the opportunity to meet friends and make excursions into the

beautiful wild areas of those islands. NZAGS has one of the larger iconic New Zealand daisies, as their emblem. In much of the UK we are fortunate that *Celmisias* of all sorts including this *Celmisia spectabilis* are happy to grow for us, either in the garden as shown above, or as show plants.

[More about other Rock Garden Clubs and their signature plants in the next IRG.....](#)

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