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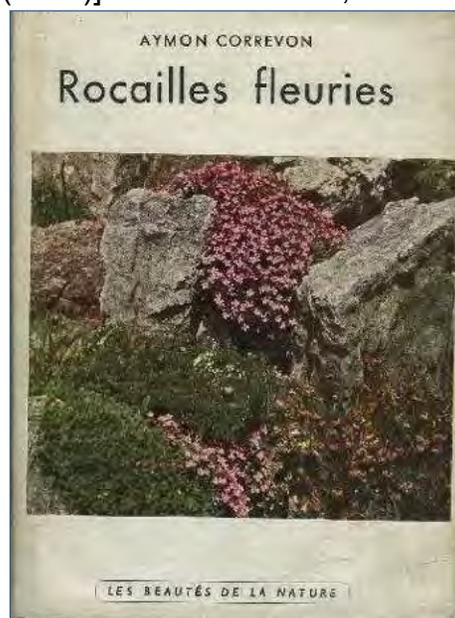
As most gardeners know, taxonomic changes can be fraught with controversy, for any number of reasons! Take for instance the name of the beautiful endemic gesneriad from Mount Olympus, *Jankaea heldreichii* – still ‘unresolved’ in the Kew Plant List. In 1993 a [paper by Christian Feuillet](#) detailed the need to change the names of various *Jankaea* hybrids to comply with the *Jancaea* name. Z.Z. writes: “We Czechs do not like the deformation of the good name *Jankaea* to *Jancaea*, because the honoured Hungarian botanist had the name *Janka* and not *Janca*.” A search around the internet will show that many others also prefer this form – including Josef Halda, who described several such hybrids, some of which are among plants from the Gesneriaceae featured this month. Cover: *Ramonda nathaliae* on limestone south of Skoplje in Macedonia, picture by Z.Z.

---Plant Portraits---

Two New Intergeneric Hybrids in the Family Gesneriaceae by Josef.J.Halda, drawings by Jarmila Haldová, pictures by Z.Z. (From [Acta Mus. Richnoviensis](#) (Sect. natur.), 19(3–4): 49-54)

In the spring of 1973 I received from the Geneva-based Aymon Correvon* a plant named *Jankaea vandedemii*, resembling *Jankaea heldreichii* with almost globose leaves, which later bloomed with lavender blue flowers, though only shallowly campanulate ones. In response to my question on the origin of the plant he answered that he got it from Mr. Vandedem, Holland, who is supposedly also the author of this hybrid, the parents of which are the Greek *Jankaea heldreichii* as the mother plant and the father is the Pyrenean *Ramonda myconii*. Due to the fact that it was an intergeneric hybrid I have later described it as *Jankaemonda x vandedemii* Halda (Halda 1979). This hybrid has shown itself as a fairly easy plant. This plant can be propagated by divisions as well as leaf cuttings any time during a period of growth. Aymon Correvon later gave me a true *Jankaea heldreichii*, *Conandron ramondioides* and *Coralodiscus lanuginosus* and so I could begin experimenting with further hybridisation.

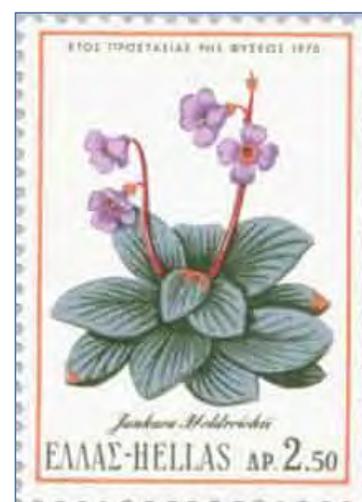
The other Balkan species such as *Haberlea rhodopensis* or *Ramonda nathaliae* and *R. serbica* are frequently cultivated. I did cross all of these species in different combinations and made many seedlings from which bloomed four plants, later described as four bigeneric hybrids – *Jankaerberlea x panayotii* Halda (*Jankaea heldreichii x Haberlea rhodopensis*), *Jankaendron x stevensiae* Halda (*Jankaea heldreichii x Conandron ramondioides*), *Jankaessandra x blumelii* [*Coracaea x blumelii* (Halda) Feuillet in *Taxon* 42(1):106 (1993)] – hybrid *Jankaea heldreichii x Coralodiscus lanuginosus* and fourth *Ramberlea x kistlerae* Halda, hybrid *Ramonda myconii x Haberlea rhodopensis* [*Preslia* 61(2):125 (1989)]. All of the others, numbering several hundred seedlings, died.



Right: A Greek postage stamp which features *Jankaea heldreichii*, an endemic plant of Mt. Olympus.

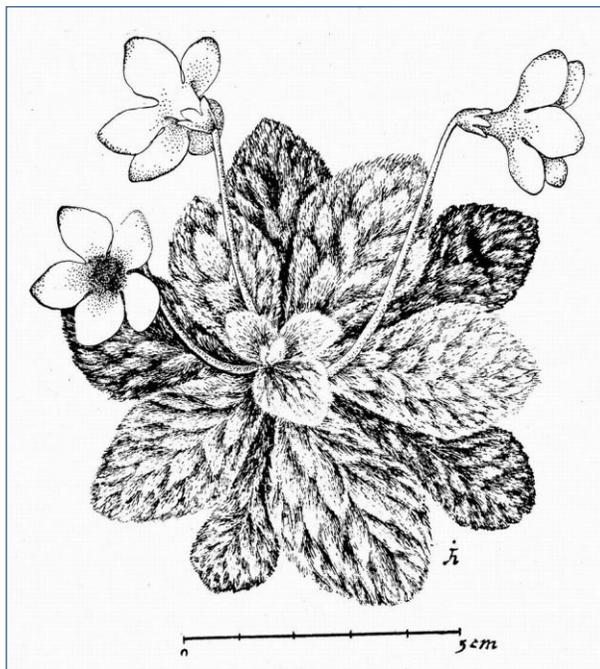
Left: Book cover of Aymon Correvon's 'Rocailles fleuries'

* Ed.: Aymon Correvon, was the son of [Henry Correvon](#), both are known for their books on alpine plants and Aymon is commemorated by the naming of several plant cultivars such as [a *Sempervivum*](#) and [a *Daphne*](#).





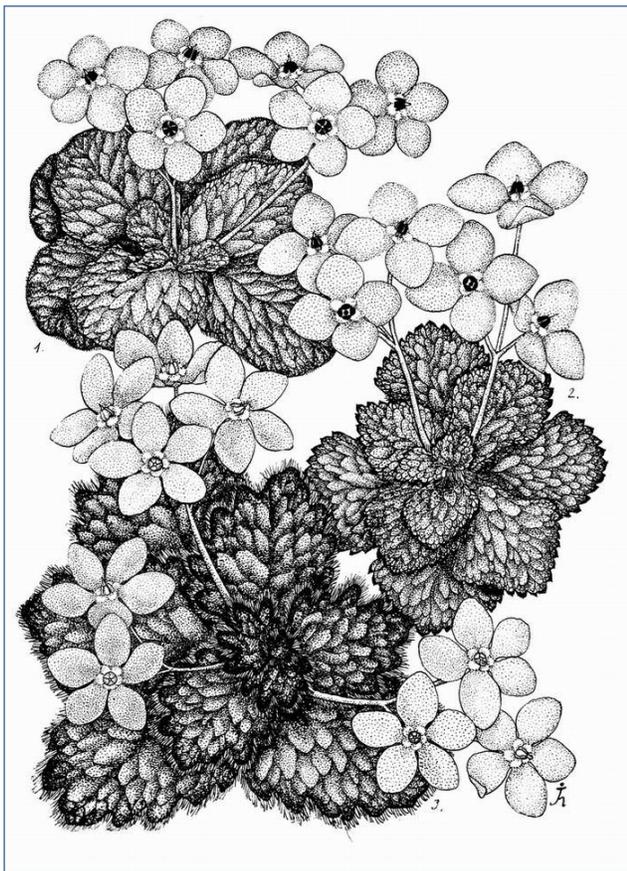
Above: *Jankaea heldreichii* photo by Kirsten Andersen, Denmark.



Left:
Jankaemonda
x vandedemii,
drawing by
Jarmila
Haldová.

Far left:
Ramonda
myconii photo
by Z.Z.

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Above: 1- *Ramonda serbica*, 2- *R. nathaliae*, 3- *R. myconii*, 4- *Jankaea heldreichii*, 5- *Haberlea rhodopensis*, 6- *Corallodiscus lanuginosus*, 7- *Conandron ramondioides*.

Right: *Jankaemonda x stibicii* 'Jaromír Stibic'

More recently we can observe in gardens new hybrids of *Jankaea heldreichii* and Balkan *Ramondas*: since *Jankaea* is often cultivated in the vicinity of *Ramonda*,



many self-made hybrids have appeared. Which of the two is the mother-plant is significant because the hybrids resemble the mother. Early in the nineteen-nineties, Jaromír Stibic from Pardubice, intensively crossed *Jankaea heldreichii* with *Ramonda nathaliae* (left) in his garden, the result of

which were several plants where the mother plant was *Jankaea*. Only one of them has persisted in cultivation; the cultivar known as 'Jaromír Stibic'. However, this combination is not identical with *Jankaemonda x vandedemii* and is henceforward described as *Jankaemonda x stibicii*.



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Jankaemonda x stibicii Halda hybr. nova. [*Jankaea heldreichii* Boiss. x *Ramonda nathaliae* Pančič & Petrovič]

Plant intermediate between both parents, evergreen, rosulate, compact; all leaves basal, elliptic or subspatulate, entire rugose, multinervous, more or less succulent, circa 15-30mm wide, 30-80mm long, upper surface adpressed ± white lanate, lower surface and base very shortly, brownish hairy. Scape erect or curved erect, circa 100mm tall, 1-3 flowered, glandulose. Calyx shortly campanulate, 4-5 lobed. Corolla subcampanulate or subrotate, lilac 4-5 lobed, 20-30mm across. Stamens mostly 5, filaments very short. Capsule septicial, 10-15mm long. [Halda's description of the plant in English.]

HOLOTYPUS HIC DESIGNATUS: PR 774462; planta in horto in Sedloňov culta; leg. J. J. Halda, 2. 6. 2011.



Left: *Ramonda serbica*

Below: *Jankaemonda x jurasekii* 'Rudi'



The second unknown hybrid is *Jankaemonda x jurasekii*, a hybrid of *Jankaea heldreichii* x *Ramonda serbica*. This hybrid has appeared independently in several Czech gardens at the turn of the last century. In each case these were self-hybrids originating in the vicinity of parents growing side by side, always resembling the mother-plant whether it was *Jankaea* or *Ramonda*.

Jankaemonda x jurasekii Halda hybr. nova. [*Jankaea heldreichii* Boiss. x *Ramonda serbica* Pančič]

Plant intermediate between both parents, evergreen, rosulate, compact; all leaves basal, elliptic or subspatulate, entire rugose, multinervous, more or less succulent, circa 15-40mm wide, 30-100mm long, upper surface adpressed ± white lanate, lower surface and base very shortly, rusty hairy. Scape erect or curved erect, circa 100-200mm tall, 1-3 (5) flowered glandulose. Calyx shortly campanulate, 5 lobed. Corolla subcampanulate or subrotate, lilac 5 lobed, 18-30mm across. Stamens mostly 5, filaments very short. Capsule septicial, 10-15mm long. [Halda's description of the plant in English.]

In cultivation, all the hybrids mentioned are much easier than the parents and make good ornamental plants. They can easily grow in our gardens in much the same conditions as *Haberlea* or *Ramonda* J.H.

Literature cited:

Feuillet C. (1993): *Coracea* Feuillet – a new proposed name for *Jankaessandra* Halda. – *Taxon*, 42(1): 106.

Halda J. (1979): Dva nové mezirodové křížence v čeledi Gesneriaceae (Two new intergeneric hybrids in the family Gesneriaceae). – *Preslia*, 51: 375-376.

Halda J. (1989): A new intergeneric hybrid in the family Gesneriaceae. – *Preslia*, 61(2): 125-127.

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--- Mountains in the Gardens ---

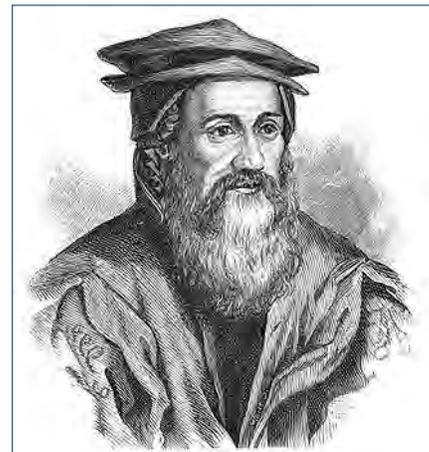
Ed.: More on plants from the family Gesneriaceae, in an adapted article originally published in 'The Rock Garden' [No.43 September 1968](#) which shows how these plants have continued in popularity for some time.

Recently there has been a boost to the family by a great rise in interest in *Petrocosmea* spp., Chinese members of this family, but most of those are not suitable for growing in the open garden for most of us, so we do not concern ourselves with them here, even though they are often seen on the UK show benches.

Gesneriaceous Plants at Keillour (in the 1960s) by W. G. Knox Finlay, F.L.S.

Named many years ago in honour of the famous Swiss botanist, [Conrad Gesner of Zurich](#) (1516-1565) this large family of beautiful plants is well known to most gardeners. It is widely distributed throughout the warmer and more humid countries of the world, especially in South America where many genera are to be found. Over fifty species of one genus alone are located in Brazil, which gives a fair indication of their degree of hardiness.

Luckily for us there are a few genera, outliers as it were, found in other less tropical countries, as well as Europe; it is of these I am now writing and, in particular, the few that we cultivate at Keillour. Here they must be hardy enough to put up with our unpredictable climate and far from ideal conditions and be able to exist outside with little or no protection. We do not grow plants to maturity in pots or pans.



There is only one part of our garden suitable and acceptable to these plants and that is the top part of the deep east gorge. This is a steep narrow gully down which a path leads, between rocky cliffs, to a burn running down to the large waterfall. The whole area is shaded by large coniferous trees. Most of our plants are growing on ledges, natural and man-made, on the north-facing whinstone cliff of which a large portion is "rotten rock" crumbling into very coarse sand that seems to encourage rooting and retain moisture. Leaf mould, compost, peat and a little bone meal are added to this detritus. As there are no special areas exclusively occupied by any one genus I propose to deal with the plants in alphabetical order; most of them flower, if not very freely, every year.



Above left: *Asteranthera ovata* - Drawings by Miss Rosemary Smith of the RBGE from the 1968 article.
Above right: *Asteranthera ovata* pictured in the SRGC forum from his Edinburgh garden by Graham Catlow, where it flowers rather well as it grows along an old tree trunk.

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Asteranthera ovata is not generally considered to be hardy out of doors except in the more sheltered gardens, but we received this species about ten years ago and since that time it has been grown outside. It is an evergreen shrublet with a creeping habit, rooting as it spreads, and at



Keillour it is to be seen hanging over a mossy rock proving that, provided the site is suitable, it can be encouraged to grow in the open even in Central Scotland. I very much regret to report, however, that it has not as yet produced any of its lovely large, rich red, funnel-shaped flowers. These are borne in pairs and each flower may measure as much as one inch across. *Asteranthera ovata* is native to Chile, where it grows as an epiphyte in the permanent shade of dense evergreens.

Haberlea is a genus containing two species, closely related to *Ramonda*, but with tubular five-lobed flowers. [*Haberlea ferdinandi-coburgii*](#) was introduced after *H. rhodopensis* and is said to differ from that species in being larger. Its pale lilac flowers measure one to one and a half inches (3.5cm) across. The colour of the corolla is darker above than beneath and its white hairy throat is densely spotted with yellow dots. It is to be found growing wild in the Balkans.



Haberlea ferdinandi-coburgii pictured by Lesley Cox in New Zealand and Wim Boens in Belgium.



H. rhodopensis from Karl Plaimer in Austria and *H.r.* var. *virginalis* from Rudi Weiss in Germany.

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H. rhodopensis, photo by Eberhard Prößdorf in Germany.

The other species, *H. rhodopensis*, has long been popular. Its leaves are much lighter on the undersides where the veins are extremely prominent and, as the leaves are all basal, they form a tufted rosette. Up to five flowers are produced on each drooping umbel and every plant may send up a number of these six-inch (15cm) high scapes. It was first collected in a remote valley in Thrace. Like most species it has small variations, a number of which have been given varietal names, but the most desirable variety is *H. rhodopensis* var. *virginalis* with beautiful pure white flowers.



Right: *H.r.* var *virginalis* photo Lesley Cox.

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Jankaea consists of a single Greek species, *J. heldreichii*, (see photo page 3) with a habit of growth closely resembling that of *Ramonda*. It is densely hairy, however, and without doubt it is this character more than any other that makes it a much more difficult plant to grow and keep alive. It certainly prefers - in fact it must have - a tilted position, and at Keillour it is lodged in a crevice under an overhanging rock where drainage is acute. It does not appear to mind being soaked during the growing season, as it gets plenty of this in its habitat on Mount Olympus, but it would strongly object to this sort of treatment when in a state of dormancy.



Mitraria coccinea photo John Weagle, Nova Scotia.

The Chilean *Mitraria coccinea* is an evergreen subshrub of doubtful hardiness which has been outside at Keillour for many years. It occupies a well-drained site in semi-shade, but apart from that receives no

other protection. This species blooms quite freely and during the summer displays its numerous bright orange-red, tubular flowers lightly suspended on pendant pedicels.



Oreocharis forrestii from Curtis' Botanical Magazine 1917.

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Oreocharis contains about twenty species, most of which are native to China, where they grow at an altitude of 11000 ft. or thereby (3300m). [*Oreocharis forrestii*](#) (of which *Roettlera forrestii* is a synonym), although recommended for alpine house culture has proved to be perfectly hardy and has been grown out of doors for many years. It was received as a very small plant, but in May it sometimes produces umbels of widely cylindrical, nodding, yellow tubes. These are effectively displayed against the background of hairy and crinkly dark green leaves which form a close rosette. *Oreocharis forrestii* is figured in [Curtis' Botanical Magazine](#) (vol.143) and although well-flowered plants were recorded in the past, it is now an extremely rare species. It was discovered in Yunnan on rocks and tree branches in forested slopes (2300-3600m) by George Forrest in the early years of this century.

Ed.: It seems this plant is still very little in cultivation in the 21st century – if you grow it and it thrives out of doors, please get in touch.

Right: Sunlit *Ramonda*, Cliff Booker

The genus *Ramonda*, of which there are three species, is native to S. Europe. It is somewhat similar in habit of growth to *Oreocharis forrestii* but is much more easily grown and may be cultivated in almost any shady position. It is probably the most popular of the hardy Gesneriads. *Ramonda myconii* (photo page 3) belongs to the Pyrenees and has been known for more than 200 years. In the garden it produces a large, flat plate-like arrangement of dark green leaves, deeply toothed and with reddish hairs. This is surmounted by several six to seven inch high (15-17cm) scapes each of which bears many purple flowers. There are several varieties listed but the best and most distinct are *R. myconii* var. *alba* and *R. myconii* var. *rosea*. *Ramonda myconii* has also been offered under its most appropriate synonym, *R. pyrenaica*.



Left: *Ramonda myconii alba*, Luc Scheldeman Right: *R. myconii* 'Jim's Shadow' from Luc Gilgemyn who says the plant was raised at Aberconwy. "I've been growing it for three years now and it's proving to be an excellent plant for a shady corner. I have the impression it flowers slightly later than its lilac or purplish cousins."

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Ramonda nathaliae pictured in Vermion, Greece by Tony Willis.

Ramonda nathaliae is an attractive Balkan species. It has foliage which is much more corrugated than that of the previous species and the leaves, although hairy, are glossy green above. The flowers, invariably composed of only four petals - a factor which immediately distinguishes it from *R. myconii* - are lavender blue with a yellow eye. It is also on record that there is a white variety. ***R. serbica*** is very closely allied to *R. nathaliae* - in fact some authorities doubt whether these plants are sufficiently different to warrant specific rank. It has the same form of growth as the others but is a

much more insignificant plant; the pale lilac flowers, like the leaves, are smaller in this species. It is necessary to provide the same conditions of shade and moisture to grow this plant successfully.

W.G.K.F.



Left: *Ramonda serbica*, Pat Nicholls

Right: *Ramonda nathaliae alba* Eberhard Prößdorf.



Some comments on hardy gesneriads from the SRGC Forum:

“Of the "hardy" gesneriads, *Mitraria coccinea* has been with me for many years outside in a shaded bed. It doesn't get much water, but grows well enough, planted in under a large *Daphne tangutica*, and flowering modestly in summer. We had a pretty hard winter this past season, with two nights of serious cold, down to -7C and -11C on December 9 and 10, 2008 respectively, but the mitraria survived nicely. I suspect the shelter given by the daphne was the key to its survival.”
Rodger Whitlock in Canada.

“I really do think that the hardy gesneriads do need demistifying. They are tough plants and unless you are growing them for show, a few scorched leaves cannot be seen as a cultivation problem. They

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bounce back from being dried out, as this happens in the wild- frequently. *Haberlea rhodopensis* grows on almost vertical cliffs- north facing. The seeds appear to germinate in patches of moss along seepage lines. We will go back to the population we know to check for seed, but I would not be surprised if they are dry for some time in summer. In winter it is possible that the rock faces they grow on may be too steep to hold much snow cover - in which case they may be frozen into the water seepage lines. We never saw any growing on the tufa deposits in this area - but I assume this is because the tufa 'grows' quicker than they do." Simon Silcock in Bulgaria.



Left: *Sarmienta repens* by Cliff Booker – this can be grown outside in favoured areas.

Below: *Ramonda nathaliae* Karl Plaimer.



Useful links for information on gesneriads:

www.gesneriadsociety.org/index.htm

<http://www.gesneriads.ca/default.htm>

<http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/gesneriphiles>

<http://www.streptocarpussociety.org.uk/links.htm>

<http://avsa.org/>

[Gesneriaceae, a scientific perspective](#) by Weber.

There are many semi-hardy members of the Gesneriaceae which, in the UK, are grown under glass and for exhibition – for instance the *Petrocosmeas* mentioned earlier, and the likes of [Chirita monantha](#) or [Tremacron aurantiacum](#) (thought by at least one very experienced grower to be hardy in England).



Left: *Chirita monantha* grown by Tony Willis.

Far left: *Tremacron aurantiacum* grown by Rudi Weiss.

If you have grown other genera from this family successfully in your garden, you are more than welcome to share your experiences and to add your comments in the [SRGC Forum](#).

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--- Gardens in the Mountains ---

Following on from the first part of Jozef Lemmens' report in September for IRG 45:
Zhongdian (Part 2) text and photos by Jozef Lemmens, Belgium.



At one point in the Tian Bao Shan valley our minibus could not go any farther and our expedition had to continue on foot. At the end of path there were logging operations and trees being removed from the forests. Along a track formed thereby, we had to climb a difficult incline in an attempt to get higher up.

Eventually we came to one big rock cliff, so we couldn't go any farther.

There were still a few beautiful plants found there such as *Cypripedium flavum*, *Spongiocarpella nubigena* (left), *Saxifraga cf. pulchra* (below right) and a small form of *Cypripedium*

bardolphianum. This small form was probably caused by the dry spring.



Cypripedium bardolphianum (above) is about 10cm high with relatively small brown-yellow flowers.



Cypripedium flavum (left) grows mostly in calcareous soil in forests and forest edges. The plants are between 30 and 50cm high with pale to dark yellow flowers, sometimes with red dots.

The next day our expedition went to **Hong Shan**. This place makes me think especially about *Primula hongshanensis*. Research has since shown that this is actually a synonym of *Primula boreiocalliantha*.

On the lower areas grew a mix of deciduous trees, pines and rhododendrons (e.g. *Rh. oreotrepes*

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and *Rh. roxieanum*). Along the roadside we found plants such *Polygonatum curvistylum*, *Androsace rigida*, ***Gentiana cf. chungtienensis*** (below) and *Primula boreiocalliantha*.



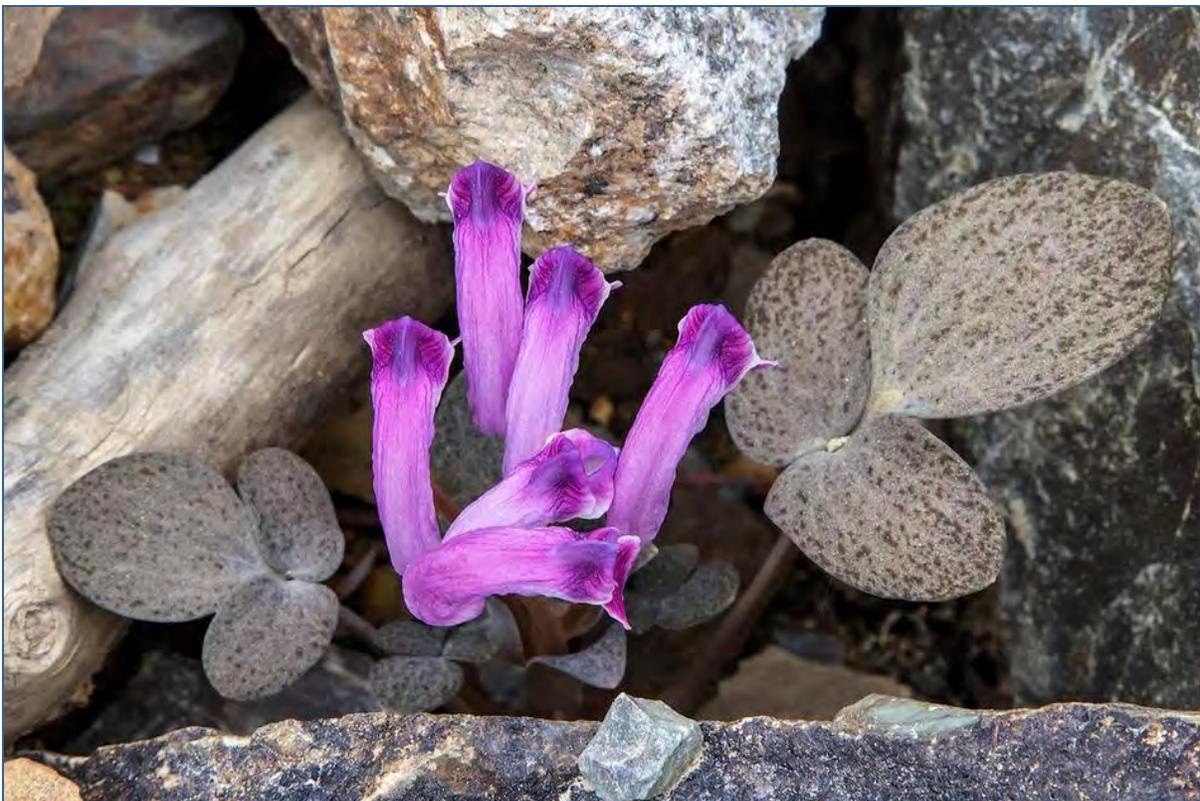
Hong Shan road.

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Primula boreiocalliantha (below) is about 30cm high with 1-2 whorls with 5 large pink flowers each.



We went up a bit higher on our knees for the gorgeous *Corydalis benecincta* (below). The leaves of this plant are made up of 3 separate leaflets. These are grey-green to greyish in colour, with faint purple spots. The flowers are pale pink to light purple, with pink veins and the apex of the flowers are often tinted darker. The plants have tuberous roots and their total height is not more than 10cm. This species occurs on calcareous, coarse screes at elevation between 3400 and 6000m.



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Further on grew a *Chrysosplenium* species (below) with strikingly yellow flowers and an intensely deep-coloured *Primula sonchifolia* (right).



Overloaded lorries heading to Sichuan are the main traffic on the paved road that slowly took us to the mountain pass. Our minibus had problems here at higher altitudes as the road was so difficult. This caused the engine to overheat frequently, but also gave us the opportunity to search the area for plants. On the other hand, we lost a lot of time, because we would have preferred to spend more time in the higher areas. At over 4300m above sea level the broken landscape was mainly of stony soils and coarse screes.



Here, pretty plants were found, such as *Primula apoclita* (left) and two other species related to *Primula chionantha*. The first was a purple form of *P. chionantha*, which has been called *Primula sinopurpurea* (below left) and has a greater range in Western China. The second was *Primula sinoplantaginea*, which is sometimes included in *P. graminifolia* (below right). It also has purple flowers, but the plants are much smaller (about 10cm) and they only grow at higher altitudes (4500–5000m).

Other *Primulas* growing here were *Primula amethystina* and *Primula nanobella*.



Above right: *Primula nanobella*

Above left and centre: *Primula amethystina*

Ed.: Larger photos can be seen in the Forum IRG Area.

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There were also *Pedicularis oederi* (below left) and *Oxygraphis glacialis* (below right).



In the coarse scree we admired plants like a *Saussurea* sp. and *Rhodiola crenulata* (below).



In the vicinity of the pass, the landscape flattened out and plants such *Pegaeophyton scapiflorum*, *Androsace delavayi*, *Corydalis pachycentra*, *Arenaria* cf. *oreophila* and *Diapensia purpurea* had the chance to live and bloom.



Left to right: *Pegaeophyton scapiflorum*, *Androsace delavayi*, *Corydalis pachycentra*.

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Diapensia purpurea is a plant that is noticed from afar and occurs mainly in bare rocky terrain in the vicinity of mountain summits, and between low rhododendron bushes or protected by surrounding rocks, on peaty soil. The plants form relatively firm cushions (sub-shrubs) up to 1 metre in diameter, but will not grow taller than 10cm. The flowering period is in May/July. The almost stemless bright pink-red to pink-purple flowers consist of 5 petals with cream anthers. I myself have only seen them at an altitude between 4000 and 4500m, but they can also occur up to 2600m.



Diapensia purpurea



Left: *Rhododendron complexum*

And then, one last day was spent in the vicinity of Zhongdian, at the Shika Shan. This mountain will always remain in my memory. We explored the Shisa Snow Mountain during [my first visit to China](#) in the fall of 2003. This mountain is a part of Shika Shan. Our first day took us from a village near Zhongdian (3200m) to an altitude of about 4000m. Here we had our first camp. The second day we went to the top of the mountain (4400m). After a few hours, one of our companions, Donna Hale was too tired to

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continue. Together with her husband David and our guide, they went back down to our base camp. [Rosi and Dieter Zschumme](#)l, Erich L bke and I continued our expedition along the ridge of the mountain. Meanwhile, a thick fog settled in. When the fog lifted a bit we could see our camp situated in the valley. In the afternoon when we got back to our camp, we were surprised that Donna and David were not there yet. A search party was formed. Even at night, some of our accompanying assistants went searching. The following day they were still not found. All we could do then was to go back to Zhongdian and ask for help. The Chinese army set up a search and after three days they were found. These were three long, nerve-racking days for us. Fortunately, everything turned out fine. We saw our guide, Mister Li, once again a few years later during our travels. He was still a mountain guide.



Above and below: *Anemone coelestina*



Now back to 2012. In China, it is becoming more and more problematic to do the things that you'd like to do. More and more rules are being imposed. On Shika Shan they have built a cable-lift, but once you go up you are only allowed to walk on the marked paths. This is all in all few hundred metres at most. Still, we were given permission to explore the area a bit further. The plants seen in bloom there were *Primula melanops*, *P. amethystina* and *P. minor*, *Diapensia purpurea*, *Solmslaubachia zhongdianensis*, *Rhododendron complexum*, *R. primuliflorum* and *R. phaeochrysum*.

Anemone coelestina was there with very dark purple flowers and also a gem, which we think could be *Anemone yulongshanica*, but it might also be *A. rupestris*.

J.L.