

International Rock Gardener



Number 1

The Scottish Rock Garden Club

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

Welcome to a new venture.....

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The Scottish Rock Garden Club is pleased to introduce an online magazine - **International Rock Gardener**. The aim is to feature fine photographs, showing the beauty of alpinists and wild flowers in their mountain or wilderness homes and in garden situations and give brief comments on cultivation, in an easily readable format.

These plants, from alpinists to bulbs, grow in all manner of harsh conditions around the world and the fascination with these plants is shared by rock gardeners who are also found in every country and this electronic magazine seeks to bring all these together.

The **IRG** team is Margaret Young, Zdenek Zvolánek and Ian Young, who will compile each issue from material received from gardeners and travellers who share this love of rock garden plants.

YOUR contributions are not only most welcome; we are actively seeking your input which will be key to the vigour of this enterprise.

To submit material for inclusion in an issue of **International Rock Gardener** to comment, please contact info@srgc.org.uk with the subject line "E-Magazine"

We are immensely grateful to those good people who have provided photographs and text to this first issue of **International Rock Gardener** and to SRGC President Liz Mills for her enthusiasm for this project and to Fred Carrie SRGC WebMaster for his unfailing support.

International Rock Gardener will be published at the end of each calendar month; click here [International Rock Gardener](#) for the home page for the magazine to access all issues.

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

Delphinium chrysotrichum Finet & Gagnep.

The cover picture from Moravian nurserymen and seed collector [Mojmír Pavelka](#) is from NW Yunnan. This species described in 1904 is 5-15 cm tall, leaf blades are 2-8 cm, corymbs are 4-8 cm tall and 2-4 flowered. It inhabits grassy, gravelly slopes from altitudes of up to 5100 m on gneissic scree in Tibet, though various seed introductions have been from around 3000m in China.

***Delphinium chrysotrichum* var. *tsarongense* (Hand.-Mazz.) W. T. Wang** differing from the type by having appressed rather than spreading hairs, has been shown in the UK at SRGC and AGS shows.

Plants in cultivation tend to grow a little taller than in nature, up to 20cms. Flowers can be off-white in colour.

Grow under glass in semi-shade in a humusy gravel mix that will retain some moisture.

Cuttings can be taken in late spring and seeds need moist dark conditions.



Visit the [SRGC Forum](#) to see pages with more photos of this plant: [one](#) - [two](#) - [three](#)

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Harry Jans

This tall friendly man from the Netherlands is one of the great characters in the rock gardening community.

Harry is fully involved in the Dutch Rock Garden Society and his innovative home garden, extensive travels and skills as a Speaker and Tour Leader are widely known and admired.



Harry Jans at old wall of China

***Chionocharis hookeri* M. Johnston by Harry Jans**



Chionocharis hookeri is sometimes called the Himalayan *Eritrichium* and is the only species in the genus and a member of the family Boraginaceae.

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Chionocharis hookeri

One of the best cushion plants, which grows always above 4500m in China (SW Sichuan, S Xizang, NW Yunnan) Bhutan, NE India and Nepal.

I found it during several plant hunting trips in Tibet on the Kangshung valley near Mt. Everest, Mi La and the Doshung La, but the best plants I have come across were found on the west side on top of the [Bai Ma Shan pass in Yunnan](#).

The very hairy cushions can reach up to 40 cm, but most are smaller. All the plants I have seen so far were always growing on very exposed ridges, on granite rock or granite gravel only. So at all times, plenty of air movement and plenty of snow cover half of the year.

The flowering time is in June/July, depending on the amount of snow during winter. The flowers are Eritrichium blue and fade to a dirty pink when they get older.



Chionocharis hookeri

Harry Jans

In common with most of the cushion plants, it has a central taproot and cushions build up with the old leaves and make it firm and round shaped.

Chionocharis hookeri has been in cultivation several times in the last 15 years, but never stayed for long in our lowland climate. Success rate is almost 0%. I kept it myself, as a seedling, for only six months. Then it died in my alpine house during the first winter.

Some of the most attractive plants are unfortunately ungrowable and we must enjoy them by looking at some lovely pictures, or if you are lucky admire them at their natural habitat.

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



Eritrichium howardii 'Blue Sky'

Harvey Wrightman

Eritrichium howardii

The talented Canadian nurseryman from Ontario, Harvey Wrightman, studied this blue flowering gem in Wyoming where its colour deletes the boundary between sky and ground.

He found no problems with germination of the seed which meant he raised many plants - which flowered and then were killed by humidity and high temperatures of the Ontario summers. He handled it as a short-lived species.

The situation changed when one blessed seedling survived in a tufa boulder for 6 years, giving hardier and easier seedlings- indeed last season he rooted 36 cuttings and raised 40 seedlings.

This mother plant (12 cm in diameter) has the cultivar name '**Blue Sky**' and its seeds are offered in his [nursery catalogue](#).

Harvey describes his favourite moments in March when he sees, in the dead-looking dormant plant, tiny fresh green leaves. This delight in a symbol of Resurrection will be familiar to many gardeners.

The cultivar grows in tufa and rough substrates with a high content of grit. He believes that the future of *Eritrichium howardii* lies in selection of the best tough seedlings of this clone or in lucky hybridizing.

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Cultivation of *Myosotis alpestris* and *Eritrichium nanum* in Bohemia by ZZ

Ten years ago [Zdenek Rehacek](#) from the highland of Eastern Bohemia, selected one seedling of ***Myosotis alpestris*** and planted it into hole in tufa stone. Now this selected plant is stemless and up to 3 cm tall and 8 cm in diameter, looking similar to some *Eritrichium*. Fortunately, seedlings keep this same dwarf habit.



Myosotis alpestris in tufa

[Zdenek Rehacek](#)



Myosotis alpestris in Gran Sasso, Italy

[Michal Hoppel](#)



Eritrichium nanum at Passo Rolle

Jiří Novák

Jiří Novák gardens in the lowland of Eastern Bohemia. His *Eritrichium nanum* is a rooted sample from Passo Rolle. He has grown two cuttings in tufa for 4 years in north-eastern exposure in his rock garden; the stone is shaded with green net during hot summer days. A cover with a sheet of glass is given in winter. Last year both plant formed one cushion and produced 20 flowers.



Eritrichium at the Passo Rolle

Jiří Novák



Eritrichium cushion in tufa rock

Jiří Novák

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Gentiana boissieri after twenty years by Josef Jurášek



This title does not mean that this gentian lives for 20 years rather it is a reminiscence about Bolkar Dag and its plants from long ago. In 1987 the author climbed Mededsiz (3524 m), the highest mountain of the Turkish massif, together with Josef Halda and his artist wife Jarmila. *Gentiana boissieri*, a true alpine from Section Pneumonante, was growing on wind swept limestone ledges below the summit.

Bolkar Dag above the Black Lake

Mojmír Pavelka

Higher, there was only *Dianthus brevicaulis* and *Draba acaulis*. In August 2008 he visited a more well known locality above Black Lake (Kara Gol) at 2800 m where you can see this species in three different habitats: northern slope with mineral slightly limy soil, southern slope in an association with grasses and at the banks of small brook (dry in summer) with primulas. Because of the dry season, flowers here were a paler blue. In normal conditions stems are about 5 cm long and their blue-purple flowers are 3-5cm long. Similar to all high mountains, Bolkar Dag covers itself every afternoon in clouds and the nights here are close to frost. This is the reason that the plant does not like baking in our lowland gardens.



Difficult plant in lowland, the true alpine *Dianthus brevicaulis* Mojmir Pavelka

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Mt. Medetsiz, highest peak of the Bolkar Dag

Zdeněk Zvolánek



Draba acaulis on tufa, with an insect

Harvey Wrightman

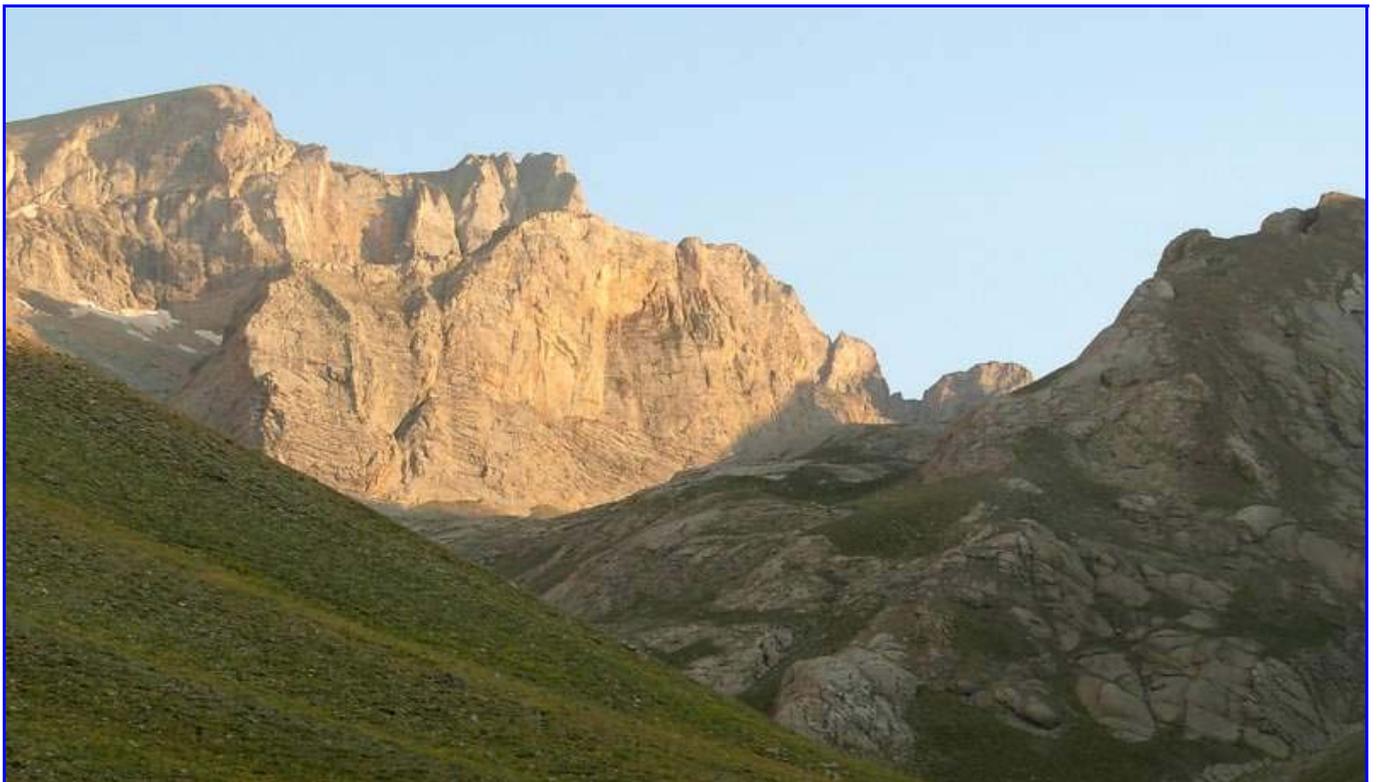
Pollinating insects are vital for all plants – this hover fly is employed in important work – and can lead to good photo opportunities in the wild or in a garden.



Gentiana boissieri

Mojmír Pavelka

Gentiana boissieri Schott & Kotschy ex Boiss. This was first described from the Caucasus in 1875 by Pierre Edmond Boissier in *Flora Orientalis*.vol. 4, part 1, Sep-Oct 1875. Happy 8 year old plants, each with 10-15 flowers, grow in Mojmir Pavelka's scree which has a 30 cm thick mixture of farm soil, crushed stone and 2-5 cm stones from a quarry. The plants have a few thick roots like *Gentiana septemfida* and they do not need protection in our continental winters. This is a small gentian with a neat habit, flowering in June even August in the UK and perfect for troughs placed in a cool position.



Bolkar Dag, Turkey

Mojmír Pavelka

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----- WORLD OF BULBS -----



Crocus michelsonii in cultivation on 27.3.2006

Dieter Zschummel

***Crocus michelsonii* by Dieter Zschummel**

This is a spring flowering species and after Brian Mathew's book "The Crocus" (1982) it is related to *Crocus alatavicus* and *C. korolkowii*. These three species are the most easterly found Crocus. The photograph is taken of plants originated from the Kopeth Dag in Iran. There it is rather common at altitudes of 1800-2000 m and is growing in companion with tulips, Colchicum and *Iris acutiloba*, *I. kopetdagensis* and *I. fosteriana*.

In cultivation it was rather rare for a long time but seems to become more widely grown in the last years. *Crocus michelsonii* is a not too difficult plant if it is cultivated like Junos and Onco-Iris: after the leaves start to wither, watering has to be avoided until October.



***Crocus korolkowii* hybrid**

It is two years since the Czech bulb specialist and rock gardener Václav Lajna died.

He had a dedicated bulb house where he grew the bulbs planted directly in open beds, well dressed with stone.

This neat white hybrid of the early *C. korolkowii* was photographed there by Zdenek Zvolánek

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----- REPORTS FROM THE BEAUTY SLOPE -----
by Zdeněk Zvolánek



Rock Garden under snow cover - all pictures Zdeněk Zvolánek

The Beauty Slope is local name for steep southern facing terrain south of Prague. In one part there was an ancient vineyard owned by monks, and in one corner the monks also had a quarry for dolerite, a fine-grained igneous rock. This corner is rented from the “Czech Forests” enterprise by Joyce Carruthers and Zdenek Zvolánek who maintain a quite extensive rock garden here.

We usually have only small samples of snow every year with intervals of deep frosts. This January we obtained plenty of snow, which is beneficial for over-wintering of tender plants like *Anchusa caespitosa*, *Lithodora zahnii* and *Daphne rodriguezii*.

We have around us in the Czech Karst ancient hornbeam and short oak forests. The pines are not original here, they were planted later. Spruces are unhappy in these dry and hot conditions. The conditions make this a natural place for xerophytes and plants loving warmth.

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Hepatica nobilis is one of our local plants, found in the region, together with *Daphne mezereum*, *Pulsatilla pratensis nigricans*, *Dictamnus albus* etc.

Mindful of our local conditions, we specialise in those plants which need watering only while they are becoming established; after that we don't give them artificial water.

Zdenek, with help of Joyce, will inform you all year round about our rock garden plants.



Cyclamen coum f. *atkinsii*

Cyclamen coum shows its flowers during warmer winters here. This species is (after 5 years) making small colonies in full sun with the help of ants.

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Helleborus niger- old cultivar with large 'Potter Wheel' flowers



H. niger, form from seed collected under Mt. Grigna Septentrionale, Italy

Helleborus niger is able to grow and flower (from winter to spring) in a deep crevice in full sun. Last year I admired Italian form, which is changing colour of petals during their aging.

We do not have an alpine house and plants in pots because we travel a lot, but our outdoor planting is very extensive, as you will see later as we continue reports for the Beauty Slope of Bohemia.



Galanthus woronowii



A Moravian Bird

Miroslav Doležal

Nerds Saturday

with Jiri Papousek and Zdenek Zvolanek

10th OF APRIL 2010

PLACE:

Peter Korn's Trädgård and Eskilsbygården, Eskilsby

TIME:

10.00 - 20.30

PRICE:

300 skr including food

REGISTER TO:

korns.garden@gmail.com



IN PETER KORNS TRÄDGÅRD:

10.00 - 17.00 The garden and nursery is open

10.00 - 14.00 Jiri and Zdenek is selling dwarf conifers and alpine

11.00 and 13.00 Workshop *Constructing a Czech crevice garden*
with Jiri and Zdenek (in english)

12.00 Guided tour in the garden with Peter Korn (in Swedish)

IN ESKILSBYGÅRDEN:

14.30 **Jiri Papousek** (in english)
Czech crevices and its plants

15.45 Coffee

16.00 **Johan Nilsson** from Gothenburg botanic garden
Plant trip to New Zealand (in swedish)

17.30 Food and coffee

18.30 **Zdenek Zvolanek**
Limestone plants from Balkan and Anatolia (in english)

19.45 **Peter Korn**
Growing alpine in moist sandbeds (in swedish)