OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

This short list marks the beginning of what we think is one of the most exciting projects ever to be laid before the specialist gardener.

From September, 1983, we shall spend most of our time travelling to bring you seeds from the vast and varied country between the Atlantic coasts of Morocco, Portugal and Spain up through the great mountain ranges of Central Europe and the Balkans and on through Turkey to its eastern borders with Iran and Iraq. It is an opportune moment to commence this work. The completion of the 'Flora Europaea' and the publication of the final volume of the 'Flora of Turkey' in 1984 will give us a basis to offer you material named according to these standard, modern floras. We also believe that the situation in the gardening world has reached a stage when all the concepts of the availability and distribution of material from new or more demanding plants - as well as the keen gardeners attitudes to the wild plants, the source material of his interest - need reviewing drastically.

OUR NEXT LIST, which will be sent out to everyone at the end of January, 1984, will set the pattern for the future. We intend to issue two lists each year - one in summer and one in winter to offer you seed as soon as we can after collection. We shall be systematically listing and code-numbering all the species with which we may be concerned on a regular basis, so that we shall have permanent field reference numbers. Using a six-digit system to allow us ample latitude, every plant of possible garden-value from our area - one of the richest habitats for bulbous and alpine-plants in the world - will be included. Each list will offer between one and two hundred items in a continually varying range of material. We shall have no difficulty in maintaining this infinite variety - how often have you been able to obtain seed of even such common and accessible species as Eritrichium nanum or Androsace helvetica, of Narcissus watieri or Fritillaria drenovskyi, far less considering species such as Viola kosaninii, Daphne malyana and Helleborus vesicarius? Every item we list will be annotated with full field data and any brief information which we feel may be of relevance or interest. We shall also tell you exactly what we are offering - not only by listing correctly named material but by telling you the minimum number of seeds in each packet. In general, we should aim to send enough seed for sowing in a 3½ inch (9 cm.) pot - a sensible size for any serious grower and one likely to produce enough plants to give reasonable latitude for losses. With, let us say, 25 seeds of a Fritillaria, most gardeners should stand a reasonable chance of ending up with 10 mature bulbs ; you will need a very much greater number of Ramonda seeds to produce 10 plants unless you are a very skilled grower indeed. We have our experience of growing a very wide range of plants over the past twenty years to guide us in such matters and we intend through the newsletters, which will accompany our seed-lists, to offer you information based on this experience. We hope to be able to offer some advice about growing particular species and to explain why you may have had disappointments in the past. In the long term, we see no reason to restrict ourselves to even as wide a field as we have outlined and we should hope to cast our net even more widely from time to time to bring you material from other more distant mountain areas and also to offer you exclusive seed from some of the fine genera we have been involved with over the past twenty years, such as Helleborus, Agapanthus, Alstroemeria and Iris. First of all, however, we must prove that putting our plans into operation does indeed constitute an economically viable project. We obviously believe it does and, having survived in business for the past twenty years we are not completely naive in reaching such a conclusion. We are viewing our plans over an initial three-year period, which should give us ample time to assess the demand for the service we plan to offer.

THE FOUNDATION of the whole proposition must be in supplying material which is needed by specialist gardeners throughout the world and in ensuring that this material is of the quality which will give the greatest chance of success. In building on this, we must have the support of skilled gardeners from the very start - gardeners who are going to grow good material from our seeds, show others what can be achieved and tell their friends about us. We have long appreciated
that the best advertising is recommendation by word of mouth and we know that our reputation will be built on the reactions of our first customers. We believe that we shall have many customers who will treat us very fairly. The many letters we have received already indicate that not only are our own feelings about seed confirmed but that there are a great many fine gardeners around the world eager to give us a fair trial! If we can convince you, our first potential customers, over the next twelve months, we must go on to widen, refine and consolidate our mailing-list until it includes every gardener, in every part of the world, who has the interest and enthusiasm to benefit from our work. The diversity of the terrain over which we shall be working will mean that many species may be much better suited to the climate of Southern Germany or Montana or New South Wales for example than the moist, maritime climate of Britain.

**FREEING OURSELVES FROM OUR CHAINS** is not only going to mean leaving the nursery business with which we have been associated for almost twenty years but also detaching ourselves from the introverted and parochial gardening atmosphere of Britain! Winding up the nursery, however, has been a more immediate problem and the enormous task in arranging this has meant that this communication has appeared rather later than intended. We could complain about the weather this year and say that much seed was about a month late in maturing (if it matured at all) but it is really other work which has been the problem. This difficulty will not occur from now on, as we shall no longer have a permanent base in Britain after September - a very necessary step towards the viability of our project as far as we are concerned. We shall let you know our plans as they mature.

**WE CANNOT PLEASE EVERYONE ALL OF THE TIME** but we can try!

Even with a little rag-bag of a list like this, we do feel there should be something to interest most keen gardeners in most temperate areas of the world. As we have neither the space nor the time to use the space if we had it, to tell you as much as we should like about all the species on the list, we are merely mentioning a few items for different sorts of places and different sorts of people. There is obviously not a lot for the alpine purist ready early in the season but some of the Cruciferae ripen their seed quickly and we include two of the best cushion *Drabas* - for the alpine-house in Britain - and those two extraordinary relic white *Ptilotrichums* from their remote and isolated stations in the Pyrenees and Sierra de Cazorla. These usually germinate quickly and I prefer to sow in spring so this should suit Southern Hemisphere customers. The two yellow *Corydalis*, *C. wilsonii* and *C. thalictrifolia* are also small, saxatile plants, easily grown from seed under glass in Britain but perhaps none too hardy in severe climates. The larger tuberous *C. nobilis* is extremely hardy and prefers colder climates but is a slow plant to mature and we include *C. lutea*, naturalised in the walls of the nursery here, as a piece of nostalgia and to emphasise that our lists will not only be for gardening snobs. There are, in fact, several genuine British natives here: *Helleborus foetidus* and the lovely Water Avens, *Geum rivale*; the yellow Horned Poppy, *Glaucium flavum*, and the blue-leaved Sea Kale, *Crambe maritima*, both plants of British shores. We meant to collect seed from our Dorset Bluebells as well but we did not find the time! There is seed, however, of what Paul Furse called the Caspian Bluebell, *Scilla hohenackeri*, from one of his own collections. This is an easy, pleasant bulb and should be better known after almost twenty years in cultivation. Among the many bulbs, enthusiasts will know what they want from such genera as *Cyclamen* and *Fritillaria*; general gardeners can note that the most reliable species in the open garden in Britain are the forms of *C. hederifolium* and *C. coum*, from both of which we have ample seed. In *Fritillaria*, *F. acmopetala*, *F. pontica*, *F. pyrenaica* and of course another superlative British native, *F. meleagris*, are the most reliable in the open garden, here. Of course, many bulbs listed will not be fully hardy in Britain but we hope they will be good garden plants with many customers where winters are milder. We are rather thin on the winter-growing South Africans but little yellow *Romulea hirta* is almost hardy here, as is the interesting X Homoglaid distributed by Norman Hadden. It comes very evenly from seed and looks like a mutated version of *Gladiolus cardinals*, of which it is almost certainly a hybrid; what the *Homoglussom* half is we shall never know. On the other hand, there are many, summer-growing bulbs, especially among the Central and South American Amaryllidaceae. Most will not stand prolonged freezing when dormant in our winters but we have found *Hippeastrum bagnoldii*, with its yellow, red-flushed flowers, perfectly temperature-hardy if kept dry. The blue lrid, *Gelasine azurea*, and *Alophia lahue*, like a miniature, violet *Tigridia*, would seem to be also. Before moving north again, a comment regarding the use of the name Hippeastrum must be interpolated, if only to illustrate our problems in naming plants. I do know that Traub and Moldenke's perfectly cogent argument that this genus should be called *Amaryllis* is accepted in most parts of the world - except it would seem Britain! For the moment, as I am still resident in Britain, I shall adhere to our distinctive brand of insularity which I have already mentioned. There will always be problems - the high-altitude
Moroccan Fritillaria, which we have listed as *F. oranensis* should be called *F. messanensis atlantica* according to Martyn Rix and *F. messanensis macrocarpa* according to Maire but I doubt if either has ever seen a seed capsule, which in our material has no resemblance to *F. messanensis*, as we know it - we shall await further pronouncements! We should have liked to tell you more about the herbaceous plants in the list, especially the hybrid Hellebores, which will be a mystery to most of you. These have always been a speciality of the nursery and our speckled ones like 'Cosmos' and 'Leo', 'Galaxy and Zodiac Strains' are unrivalled - they will not, of course, come true in any case. Nor will seed from those other highly bred plants, the Auriculas. Neither of these groups will be available next season, unfortunately: the basic collection of Hellebores will be leading a rather itinerant life over the next few years and Jenny's collection of old Auriculas will all be sold. We can assure you of many compensations, however. We have just left enough space to thank our friends for giving us some additional seeds to make this list more diverse and interesting; for these, our thanks to Dinah Batterham, John Blanchard, Ivor Barton, Dave Hoskins, Melvin Jope, Irene Mitchell and Mike Tucker. We are especially indebted to our good friend, Michael Salmon, for allowing us to include a few of the seeds we have gleaned, by way of a peppercorn rent, for the space occupied by his extensive collection of bulbs, which have been with us for a season, while he was arranging to move them to fresh pastures.

**News from Jim and Jenny Archibald January 1984**

**BETTER LATE THAN NEVER - BUT ONLY JUST!**

We eventually reached the Pyrenees to start to collect what we hoped would be enough material for a winter seed-list on 2nd October - at least four weeks too late we now know from experience. We had, however, very little choice in the matter. The work of clearing up the nursery seemed to go on and on until at last we pretended that we had in fact left and shut ourselves up to complete the seed orders many of you (too many, we may add for the amounts of time and of seed we had available) had so kindly sent in response to our first preliminary list of fresh seed and to make our final preparations. Clearing up two acres of nursery stock after twenty years on the site, organising the plants we are retaining in a variety of new homes and arranging our personal possessions to fit in with a more mobile life-style, are not experiences we wish to repeat again! The gods of the mountains were reasonably kind to us in the week we spent in the Pyrenees, though they did wink at us on occasion, with gleams in their eyes as they sent lightening flashing all around us, as we crawled about on all fours collecting *Gentiana pyrenaica* seed amid the drifting cloud. The weather was sufficiently unpredictable to discourage us from climbing too high on several occasions. We abandoned our plans to dash down to the Sierra Nevada, as we were simply too late, and pushed east to the Maritime Alps, where the weather was good for a day or so though there no seed at all to be had on several species we had hoped for. It was on 14th October that the gods decided that they had given us enough. As we ground up and up to the Col de la Bonette, at 2802m the highest road-pass in the Alps, the cloud came down and sleet drove towards us. We turned back in the hope of being able to collect there the next day. All night lightening flashed and thunder rolled and in the morning the mountains were white with snow. La Bonette was closed. It still is and will be until June at least. Surely this could not happen everywhere. We pressed on to Italy and wound our way up to the Croce Domini, at 1892m, surely still possible. At 1500m the road started to ice badly and snow was lying. It was all over. We fled eastwards: we climbed into the mountains of Montenegro in a blizzard; there was snow on Olympus in Greece; even on Parnassus it snowed the day before we got there on 28th October and we looked for *Colchicum boissieri* underneath a layer of snow! You might think this would at least be an end to it but when we came back through Jugoslavia in December, more snow than they had seen for twenty years (since the 1962-63 winter which was also memorable in Britain, in fact) arrived on the same day as we did. We were stranded for three days (comfortably I might add) with our van under 1 metre of snow and over 200 lorries and trucks queuing up on the Greek border while they cleared the road - "There is not usually as much snow as this in Macedonia", they assured us. We have done what we can but it is no more than anyone taking a couple of weeks holiday from Britain could accomplish. We had secretly planned a sort of tour de force of European Primulas and were doing quite well until La Bonette! We were convinced that we should be able to collect a good number of high alpines and were apprehensive that the list might contain very little of interest to the less specialised gardener.

In fact the reverse is true. What an unpredictable life this is.
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

JJA catalogues were notable for the detailed and informative plant information contained therein. Jim's insightful and often pointed comments on the world of horticulture in his forewords to the JJA lists are equally well known and often struck a chord with the reader. The following is a simple collation of those writings from all the catalogues. Some notes on specific genera are included, to whet your appetite for the complete archived lists which are a remarkable documentation of the seeds offered by Jim and Jenny and their friends' travels to discover plants in the wild and secure them in cultivation around the world.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, SHERBORNE, DORSET, ENGLAND, UK AUGUST, 1984

CATCHING UP!
Though we were somewhat later in leaving Britain last spring than intended, we have managed to catch up on our timing by spending four weeks less than planned in Turkey. We do not feel this will have greatly prejudiced the results of this year's work and are reasonably pleased with the list of seeds we have succeeded in producing for you at this stage. Of course, the memories of what we are unable to list for various reasons remain frustrating and disappointing. We could give ourselves a great ego-trip, by reproducing our field-notes in full, listing out all the plants we have found, as has been the custom with plant-collectors. Many of you would have enjoyed writing to ask for species like *Crocus asumaniae* and *Iris sprengeri* but it would have been frustrating and disappointing for you to have found that you were unlikely to receive any, as we had only been able to collect, literally, one or two capsules of such plants. Generally speaking, the seed set on bulbs was very poor throughout: we reckoned only one in fifty *Crocus robertianus* had set seed and possibly less than one in a hundred *C. cvijicii*.

The situation in Southern Greece was even worse. We had spent some weeks last autumn, locating the most prolific colonies of many endemic species with a view to collecting some seed this year, so we knew precisely where to look (it would have been almost impossible otherwise): when we returned we found that hardly a single capsule had set in most cases, though we wasted a fortnight travelling around to look! Our Greek friends told us that it had been a very odd season indeed with a long, wet winter suddenly entering into a very hot, dry period so that, as they put it, "there has been no spring in Greece this year" The situation in the Balkans, to the North, was actually much better for us. It was quite a late season, as it was in much of Turkey, and we saw some fine flowers on our way through, collecting some good seeds on our way back.

All in all, we are not displeased with what we have in sufficient quantity to offer you. We wanted to list Hellebores (which we shall not be doing next year, so take the chance now) and you will find a good range -of course, we cannot offer everything: the later Yugoslavian species had not matured their seed sufficiently for us to collect them; if we had been there at the right time, *H. multifidus* would have been long gone. We wanted to offer the S.E. European Gesneriads and they are all here except for *Ramonda nathaliae*, which had dehydrated rapidly without even starting to set seed in the only colonies we know. We wanted to list a good range of the Boraginaceae and you will find several of the finest here. Many, of course, are not; these, Jenny always philosophically says, can keep for another season. The moral in all this for you, the customer, is to make sure you order everything you might want when it appears in our lists. We may be some time in collecting it again. With very local species, which are difficult to reach, it might be a once in a lifetime opportunity.

DESPATCH OF SEEDS FROM THIS LIST poses something more of a problem for us than ordering promptly does for you. The best thing is for us to explain what we shall be doing over the next few months. Early in September, we must leave to collect seed from some of the higher-growing W. European species. This will be a comparatively short trip of between four and eight weeks -until the snow falls, in fact. As we told you last year, we were about one month too late in leaving and had about a fortnight to collect in before snow closed the higher Alpine passes. We shall send as many orders before we leave as is possible. If you have not received your order by mid-September, please bear with us - you will get it as soon as we return in early November or before. We may try to make some arrangement to despatch orders when we are outside Britain but make no promises. If we can, so much the better; if not, we shall get the seed to you in plenty time for sowing. This will be our priority on our return. As soon as we have completed any outstanding orders, we shall start work on another seed-list to be sent out in early winter. This will obviously be a 're-hash' of the present list, where enough seed remains to list again, but will also include what matures between now and then. It might seem more sensible to delay this list until November but by the time we could get seed to you from such a list, it would be too late for sowing the Hellebores, Cyclamen and many of the 'bulbs', which are the cornerstones of this particular list. Next year, we shall only issue one list about one month later than this one -a compromise which will mean we cannot collect the later, high altitude European material. All this effort to bring good fresh seed to you at the correct time for sowing
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

will be rather futile if you do not treat it properly! We are sure you will and we shall make a few suggestions about some of the material collected this season in the winter list, where we can also expand on such matters as our numbering system, the names we have used and also, of course, our experiences over the year as a whole. For the immediate moment, all we need emphasise is that you should sow almost everything included in Section I and Section III without delay. For Section II material, the key genera for immediate sowing are Cyclamen and Helleborus along with the 'monocots.'

A FOOTNOTE FOR THE BRITISH

who will be reminded by the mention of 'monocots' that another reason for our current sojourn in Britain is the fact that we have to despatch bulb orders. This we do at the very end of the season, in as much as it has been impossible to collect enough seed of any of the species listed in the winter list of Hellebores, Hostas, etc. and a Summer, 1985, bulb list, both to be despatched with our November Seed List. If you are receiving this list, you will receive these also -no need to ask!

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, SHERBORNE, DORSET, ENGLAND, UK  NOVEMBER, 1984

BEATEN AGAIN!

Our autumn journey to Europe was again curtailed by snow, which came even earlier than in 1983. As we returned through Central Spain, on 3rd October, there was 'mucho frio' and the first snowfalls dusted the highest of the distant Sierra de Guadarrama with white. On 5th October, we crossed the Pyrenees in a blizzard, which spread eastwards, closing the higher Alpine passes. This was the culmination of a very cold, late season in the Central European ranges, which we are sure would have meant little, if any, seed set on the highest species, in any case.

When we visited Campanula zoysii at over 2000m in the Julian Alps on 28th July, the buds were only just visible: seed could not possibly have been ripe until October, by which time it was again under snow. We must always show a little informed common-sense and a considerable amount of what we have called 'planned fluidity' in our journeys. Accordingly, our unscheduled visit to the Maritime Alps, where the first snows partially melted, enabled us to make collections such as Saxifraga florulenta and Viola nummularifolia, which might be very difficult to repeat. As we stressed in our last Newsletter, with such local species, such collections might offer a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire a species. The area with which we are involved is so vast and the diversity of species so enormous that it is impossible to do more than collect seed from a very small proportion of these in any one season. The number of exciting plants which we have visited this season and been either too early or too late to gather seed from -or indeed which did not set seed at all in 1984 -is perhaps about twice the number we have been able to include in our lists. The permutations on the places we can visit and the timing of our visits to them are almost infinite, so we see little danger of any stale monotony creeping into lists. Next season we shall issue only one list, in September, 1985, so that there will be no repetition of our 1983 or 1984 abortive attempts to collect the highest or latest flowering Europeans. On the other hand, we shall journey back through Europe in August, around one month later than this year, so that collections of main season plants will be richer than in 1984. Just as we had a cursory look at S.W. Turkey this year, we shall have a cursory look at S.E. Turkey in 1985, leaving the North for 1986 and perhaps the extreme West for 1987. To make some collections in Europe will, however, mean that we must leave Turkey about the end of July, far too early to collect the higher or later species, unlikely to be ripe until September or October. We do, however, have more than enough exciting species in mind to ensure your continued interest.

The interest shown by customers in our first list of any significance, in August of this year, was much greater than we had hoped for at such an early stage and enables us to project our plans with much more confidence. One of our main problems will often be collecting enough seed of certain items to list; the decision as to whether or not to offer a species, when we know there will not be enough packets to satisfy the demand, is a difficult one. In the last list, the Alkanna spp., Jankaea and Helleborus vesicarius understandably sold out rapidly but there was also great demand for genera such as Cyclamen, Primula, Narcissus, Fritillaria and Viola.

A lot of these plants do offer difficulty in collection: saxatile species are often difficult of access; bulbs are very irregular in their seed setting and more than most groups vary greatly from year to year in the number of individuals in any one colony which mature seed; with species with fast-maturing, explosive seed capsules, like Viola, it is simply a question of how many capsules are in the right state for collection on the particular day you visit a colony. There is a great deal of luck attached to it all! So, if you are disappointed at not receiving everything you order, remember we suffer many more disappointments in collecting the seed for you!
**THE ARCHIBALD FILES -OR- THE WORLD ACCORDING TO JIM**

**NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, SHERBORNE, DORSET, ENGLAND, UK**

**NOVEMBER, 1985**

**IT IS NOW ALMOST EXACTLY A FULL YEAR** since we wrote to tell you what we have been doing and sent a list of our seed-collections. We are doing so now rather more than one month later than we had originally planned to do. We made our last seed-collection in Europe on 31 August, 1985, and returned to England early in September to be met with family-illness and a subsequent death, which was inevitably upsetting both to ourselves and work. We had already arranged to attend the 'Second Plant Life of South West Asia Symposium' at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, starting on 15 September, as it promised to be an event of considerable importance and historical significance. We did attend and it certainly met with our expectations, though we were obliged to leave before it was completed.

The problem which met us when we were again able to resume a methodical work-pattern was that the orders for bulbs for our British customers had not been dealt with during the period before we left for Edinburgh, as we had intended. By the end of September, many were growing and some even coming into flower in their pots. We pressed on with repotting and packing but these operations involved sending out material in growth, wrapped in polythene and peat -a much more time-consuming operation than working with dry material in envelopes.

Moreover, we appeared to have accumulated almost twice as many orders as we handled last season so, obviously, we had to take at least twice as long to deal with them. When all this was at last completed, we could turn our attention to this seed-list. This lists about twice as many items as any of our previous lists -so it has taken about twice as long to check names, twice as long to clean and check material and twice as long to type! The logic of all this might expect one "to anticipate that we shall receive twice as many orders; however, while we have certainly expanded our mailing-list, we have certainly not twice as many potential customers. It is too much to expect that the same number of customers as last year spend twice as much money. Nevertheless, it has to be our object in business to make you buy as much as possible: if we force you to make a list of what you want much longer than what you can afford to buy, then we have been successful.

**THE SECOND PLANT LIFE OF SOUTH WEST ASIA SYMPOSIUM** which took place at Edinburgh in mid-September, in many ways marked the end of an era. The final volume of the 'Flora of Turkey'-the Supplement-is written and Peter Davis retired at the end of September after editing this superlative work, the first volume of which appeared in 1965: exactly twenty years of sustained excellence to produce one of the finest regional floras the world has seen. Of course, this event was a botanical one. We sit on the fence at the edge of this world, looking most of the time towards the horticultural side but forever glancing over our shoulders at the activities of the scientists. Very few people are involved in both worlds and there were few personalities there who might be familiar to gardeners -Brian Mathew, Martyn Rix and Professor Hewer came up for the occasion. There were, however, many of the people behind the names of plants, which might be known to you. As a Dionysia enthusiast, I could not feel too remote with people around, like Ian Hedge of Edinburgh, Professor Freitag of Kassel and Dr Termeh of Tehran - even if one has not had the opportunity to grow the species which commemorate them. The event was largely a social occasion and as such was an overwhelming success. What a marvellous experience it was to meet once again with Dr Esfandiar, who gave such splendid assistance to all who collected in Iran and whom I had not seen since 1966, or to exchange nostalgic memories with Professor Rechinger of Vienna (whose monumental 'Flora Iranica' still continues) about collecting twenty years ago. Above all, the conference emphasised the tragic trivialities of international politics; delegates from the USA and Iran, from Syria and Israel came together briefly to talk about the vegetation of one of the world's most politically troubled regions. They did this in a happy and stimulating fashion and so much enjoyed each other's company that they have made tentative plans to meet again in five years.

**OUR SOCIAL LIFE** is admittedly somewhat restricted by travelling for about half the year. However, apart from the vast number of interesting people we meet and the friends -who have nothing to do with plants-we make, our journeys are punctuated by unexpected meetings. When we visited Falakro in N Greece, Professor Arne Strid came striding down the mountain, towards his parked Land-Rover (with its tell-tale herbarium presses on the roof) just as we arrived. We spent a pleasant hour or so with him and met him again at Edinburgh, where he was reading a paper. Many of you will know his beautiful book 'Wild Flowers of Mount Olympus' and he is currently writing a 'Mountain Flora of Greece', the first volume of which should appear at any moment and which is destined to become an essential part of our luggage. Sitting disconsolately by the roadside in the Hakkari, away down in furthest S.E. corner of Turkey near the Iraq/Iran borders, beside our disembowelled Volkswagen (whose dynamo had been removed for reconstitution in Baskale), a car stopped and out jumped Norman Stevens, the English bulb-nurseryman, dashing down to single-mindedly collect Fritillaria straussii! We both met up again a few days later with the Alpine Garden Society plant-hunters in the "basic accommodation" of the four-star 'Hotel
Akdamar' in Van (which enabled us to scrounge long-overdue hot showers.) They were neatly packaged by Brian Mathew, Barbara Martin, a Turkish courier, two Turkish drivers and a variety of Istanbul botanists. What an august lot they were! *Fritillaria* experts: Jack Elliott, Roger MacFarlane and David Foreman. Aroid-man Peter Boyce; botanical artist Mary Grierson; Jo Darrah, who has made many important collections of dried material already in Turkey, both with John Watson and in her own right; Chris Skelmersdale of the bulb-growers, Broadleigh Gardens; David Haselgrove of A.G.S. publications ..... To name but a few! We spent a very pleasant few days with them as they issued forth periodically from their air-conditioned coach, fanning out over the hillsides with their bundles of polythene bags and varied tools, which might come in "useful for investigating the soil", as Lionel Bacon put it. What was particularly gratifying was the way in which the sheer weight of their number appeared to strike terror into the hearts of the local Turks, who retreated to view their activities from a safe distance.

Normally, we rapidly accumulate a retinue of 'locals' whose hospitality, friendliness and oppressive interest in our work constitute the most exhausting aspect of plant-hunting in Turkey. Seriously, we did enjoy seeing our A.G.S. friends briefly and sharing with them their adventures at the army road-block near Catak and their meeting with the Kurdish Terrorist in the crater of Nemrut Dagi. We normally lead a very quiet life. Norman Stevens was arrested by the police on the Syrian border; George Smith was arrested on the USSR border. Nothing exciting likely that ever seems to happen to us .....Thank God!

**MORE SOCIAL WHIRL** seems likely to engulf us if we carry out our intention to visit the Alpine Garden Society 'Early Spring Show' on 15 March, 1986. Starved of the company of fellow-enthusiasts for a whole long winter, drifts of A.G.S. members blossom annually at this event, expanding in the wan sunshine of an English Spring, like *Crocus* around a melting snow-patch. It seems as good a place as any to see as many old friends as possible in a short space of time. As we shall be there purely for pleasure -not for business -we must ask customers to seek us out to tell us which of our seed-collections have failed to germinate with them. We very much hope to have the chance to meet some of our American customers next year as well. We shall be in the USA between 14 and 27 January, 1986: in Colorado for the first week and around Philadelphia for the second. We shall be at the Wilmington Study Weekend for the 24-26 January, talking mainly about bulbs, in particular the higher-altitude, snow-melt ones. If you are likely to be anywhere we are do come and introduce yourself -our business is not so large that we do not remember our customers’ names.

**PROVIDING YOU WITH NEW & INTERESTING MATERIAL** is a consideration always high on our list of priorities and with this in mind we had considered moving on after our visit to the USA to spend a month or so collecting in the Northern Andes, following this up with another seed-list towards the end of March next year. Good sense has prevailed and we have dropped the idea, which, as you will see is just as well. There is no great problem about collecting in South America; costs are not vastly more expensive than those we have to budget for in travelling out to Eastern Turkey (for the North & Central Andes at any rate). What is difficult to explain to most gardeners who express an interest in Andean plants is the incomprehensible vastness of this mountain range, curving down from Venezuela to the tip of Chile over a distance about equal to that between London and Mount Everest or almost twice as far as from New York to San Francisco. One might as well talk about Eurasian plants, covering everything from the Alps to China, as Andean ones. The diversity of plants and climatic conditions is at least the same. The Peruvian and Bolivian growing-seasons indicate a trip between June and September as possibly best for seed -this is the same period as we collect seed in Europe and Turkey. Having dismissed S. Chile as too expensive for a short visit, we were left with the North. We have already been to Colombia and knew one area sufficiently well to be able to project collecting an assured 30-50% of the material we need for an economical list there. Worthwhile high-altitude plants are rather thinner in Venezuela; the incredibly rich flora of Ecuador was our best bet for the balance. Here we were dealing with uncertainty as the climate is a mixture of the North and Central influences and indications were that February might be too early for peak-season seed collections. We scrapped the idea. We are in business and cannot afford to invest in ventures with too high risks! Unlike those who ask subscribers to gamble and back them, we are using our own money to finance our work and it is essential that we produce material you will buy. Thank Heavens we did reach this decision! The area we knew well enough to rely on to produce a basic seed-collection has quite simply blown-up. All of you will be aware of what has been one of the greatest natural disasters of our time -the cataclysmic volcanic activity which blew the top off the snow-covered giant Nevado El Ruiz, over 5000m high, melting its snow-cap and drowning the heavily populated Magdalena Valley on its Eastern side under a river of mud. While we may never again be able to climb up to the little *Drabas* and *Pernettyas* on the snow-line of El Ruiz, we shall visit the Andes again; we shall bring back seeds for you; whether you find it possible to grow these plants, however, will be quite another matter. In the meantime, we believe both you and ourselves have still a great deal of pleasure and excitement to look forward
to from the areas we are currently working in. As long as we remain solvent, we hope to continue to provide you with this new and interesting material. We are certainly not going to make our fortunes doing so. In a season when we have more or less written-off the suspension on our poor old Volkswagen and feel forced to replace it with a Land-Rover, financial considerations are not the least important ones. We believe we are offering what you want and you tell us our seed germinates, as so it should. The only reports of failures have been among genera like *Helleborus* and *Leontice*, which are indeed unpredictable and may well come up after a season or so -there must be more but we only hear of the successes, which at least shows a very positive attitude to life among our customers. I could ramble on but feel at least one or two aspects of our lists deserve a little overdue explanation and expansion. We go to a great deal of trouble to provide you with accurate information in these lists and hope that you will keep them for future reference, so we shall try to deal with different features of the standard format in this and future newsletters. The next one will not be until this time in 1986, as we shall be staying late in Turkey to collect seed from the higher areas in E. Anatolia and shall not return to Britain until October, 1986.

**FIELD DATA** is provided for all our collections. Apart from the name of the country, which is in English (e.g. Austria, Spain or Greece rather than Osterreich, Espana or Ellas), the provinces and localities which follow are given in the language of the country concerned (e.g. Oros Parnassos, Evia, Crna Gora or Kayseri not Mt. Parnassus, Euboea, Montenegro or Caesarea). Transliteration from Greek and Arabic alphabets is that used by Michelin maps, which we consider provide the most accurate transcriptions for correct pronunciation. For Yugoslavia, the 'Jugoslavija Auto Atlas' is used for all place names and for Turkey the 'Buyuk Atlas'. Unfortunately, the lack of keys on my typewriter means that stress-marks, umlauts and cedillas, which substantially alter the pronunciation of many letters in different languages, are missing. Measurements are all metric. The precise date when wild seed was collected is provided. Comments in brackets are generally to provide a little additional information or help to gardeners. In this respect, it should be remembered that information is likely to be based on the plant as it is in nature -a plant which is a compact cushion in a rock crevice at 2500m in Turkey might not remain a compact cushion in a rich soil at sea-level in England. Such problems are for the cultivator to overcome -not the collector.

**THE MATTER OF NAMES** and an explanation of the reference number system we use will be expanded on in future news-letters. For the moment, you need only note that the numbers are a permanent key to all the other information and should be preserved. Only the numbers will appear on the seed packets so do keep this list; if you have a friend who wants a copy, pass on the name & address – don’t give away your list. The names we use constitute far too great a subject to expand on now. We go to considerable trouble to provide you with as acceptable and sensible a name as possible. All the Turkish herbarium specimens from 1985 have now been determined by Ian Hedge, Peter Davis, Kit Tan and Robert Mill but I do not have the list yet as it is still with the typist. The names here are mine except for the *Salvia* spp. which I have had confirmed by telephone. If there are any alterations, you will be informed. Only a couple of errors occurred last year -the *Alkanna* collection which you will find under our number 6735 in this list and the *Arum dioscoridis liepoldtii* listed as Dracunculus. We shall be glad to send a packet of *Dracunculus* seed to anyone really upset at receiving the *Arum* instead! While we are sorry the *Alkanna* is not blue-flowered, we feel this is not so much an error as a puzzle -we shall send a packet of blue-flowered *A. aucherana* to anyone who can tell us what the plant we sent out actually is! Constructive criticism is welcome; destructive comments are not!

**NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, SHERBORNE, DORSET, ENGLAND, UK**  

**NOVEMBER, 1986**

**SOME OF YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE PROBLEMS** with this list. Last year we doubled the size of our seed-list, as our activities began to settle into a reasonably workable and satisfying pattern. We acquired many new customers, of course, but what was gratifying (as well as being essential to the continuance of our activities) was the fact that we are continuing to retain almost all of our original customers and persuading them to maintain or even increase their expenditure on our seeds. A great many of you wrote to say that we had, indeed, been successful in forcing "you to make a list of what you want much longer than what you can afford to buy." Last year's list was quite satisfying to us; this year, however, we are very pleased with the results of the season's collecting. We therefore feel confident that many of you are going to have problems in choosing material and we certainly do not anticipate any reduction in sales! The 1986-87 list is a little larger than the 1985 one but it has now reached the maximum manageable size. What we must now aim to do is to continue to provide new and desirable material for you. This year, there are about 200 new items in the list. In 1987, we shall have no problem in providing a similar number as we are temporarily abandoning Europe and Turkey for a season collecting in North America. In 1988, we plan to return to Turkey, where we shall concentrate on collecting in the S.W. corner, an area rich in endemics, which we have neglected up till now, as well as spending a little more time in N. Greece
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and S. Yugoslavia. In 1989 ..........but that is too far away for two people who tend to run their survival-pattern on a rather short-term basis! We can, then, offer you the protracted prospect of an excruciatingly tantalising range of new and exciting seeds. Our only fear is that your enthusiasm might fade or that we might cause too many nervous breakdowns. For the moment our energy and ingenuity is relatively unimpaired; we hope you can say the same.

CARAVAN TO VAN "This man is mad!" was one friend's pronouncement on learning of our intention to pull a caravan (trailer to Transatlantic readers) out to the East of Turkey and use it as a base in 1986. Nevertheless, we did so and, all in all, we feel the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. In 1986, we were involved with a somewhat different style of collecting to that which we had indulged in in previous years. We wanted to look at a relatively small number of areas in more detail rather than make our tortuous way around collecting as we progressed. It would have been impossible to carry out our intentions if we had not had experience of the roads over which we would be toiling and knowledge of where we could safely deposit our encumbrance for an indefinite period. Accordingly, we travelled fairly directly to the East with a few diversions. In Greece we left our caravan with Greek friends, while we made side-trips to Helmos and Parnassos, then it was more or less straight out to Van to leave our home for over two months, deposited in a field beside Lake Van. The benefit of having a permanent, organised base was enormous. We make a great many collections and these are comparatively bulky; to be able to rid ourselves of these while we travelled around was bliss. Moreover, to deal with the work of seed-cleaning, drying and organising dried specimens, identifying collections and all such ancillary work (which occupies rather more time than actually gathering the original material) in relatively spacious and comfortable surroundings, made life both easier and much more efficient. The other side of the coin meant that we had the Land Rover, which we had used for towing, free for use in conditions, which would have been hard on a less sturdy vehicle. A 4-wheel drive vehicle is not necessary for our work and one seldom comes across conditions which could not be surmounted by any small car with a competent driver. Hiring a little car for a two-week holiday and hammering the poor, little thing half to death is not a style of plant-collecting that can be extended to six months, however. Vehicle problems are usually the cumulative result of unfavourable conditions like dust and vibration. You must have something fairly substantial to withstand treatment for prolonged periods that are very hard both on occupants and the vehicle. For six-month trips use a Mercedes - or a Land Rover. Using our caravan at Van as a base, we travelled out in loops on trips that lasted either a day or several weeks. A two-week trip resulted in chaos which needed almost the same length of time to re-organise and reduce to order. When one considers that we do spend about half of our time abroad dealing with collected material and in other non-productive pursuits, such as vehicle repairs and servicing or shopping for food, and then takes into account that we spend at least half of the remaining time in actually driving the vehicle, there is not a lot of time for actually collecting seed (far less enjoying the pretty flowers!). Our time abroad is, in fact, very carefully divided up and as a result our existence tends to be much more pressured and highly organised than one might imagine. It is not a 'nine to five' routine but it is a 'dawn to dusk' one for seven days a week. One may not remember the date, except when you come to write up field-notes, and one never knows the day of the week, but you do find yourself half-way up a mountain continually looking at your watch to judge if you can spend another ten minutes collecting seed from a particular plant.

POLITICS AND PLANT- HUNTING In spite of scheduling our activities in some detail, we invariably set-off each year with the intention of collecting many species, whose homes we never find enough time to visit. Our consolation is that they remain to tempt us back on some future date and will provide all of us with that new and exciting material, which is the life-blood of our work. Within the planned scope of this year's journey, for instance, were such incredible and desirable species as Potentilla oweriniana, Rhodothamnus sessilifolius and Campanula hakkiarica. You will not find them listed because we failed to find them but because we did not even attempt to find them. We are essentially under the pressure of achieving maximum productivity: we must always select localities, which are both of the easiest access and will yield the greatest number of worthwhile collections. A species like P. oweriniana means devoting at least three days to the attempted collection of what might be only one item (even then the attempt might end in failure!). One such listing might mean the loss of ten or more other listings. For this reason, we are delighted to be able to offer a species like Draba acaulis, collected by two amateurs, Zdenek Zvolanek and his friend. It would be at least a two or three day project to collect such a plant and not easy to justify in our case. As in the horticultural field, it is possible for the amateur to rise to greater heights (literally in this case) than the professional, simply because he is not earning his living from his activities. Of course, there are all the plants we try to collect seed from and fail because seed has dispersed or failed to set. These were not too numerous this year but include such desirable species as Lilium kesselringianum, Veronica thymoides, Scorzonera sericea and Gypsophila adenophylla. We know where they are and we shall collect seed in
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the future - we are well used to the 'You can't win them all' philosophy. Apart from the considerations of time and timing, there is the 'circumstances beyond our control' factor. This could include everything from personal illness to a gear-box disintegrating on top of a mountain-pass but generally means external human activity. In 1986, this prevented us from collecting on the higher mountains of Hakkari in the S.E.corner of Turkey. We certainly reached Hakkari to collect such endemics as Pelargonium quercetorum, Salvia macrochlamys and Primula davisi but these live in the gorge of the Zap River not on the great mountain massifs of Cilo Dag or Sat Dag. It was our misfortune that during our time in Turkey, Kurdish terrorists/freedom fighters were unusually successful in killing an appreciable number of Turkish soldiers, including a high-ranking officer, in Hakkari, with the result that the Turkish army would not allow anyone to travel away from a road, leaving their patrols with a free-sweep in the mountains. The prohibition was perhaps just as well as we always go in greater apprehension of being shot by nervous teenagers in army uniform than by the Kurdish terrorists/ freedom fighters, who are probably able to distinguish plant-hunters from uniformed soldiers and ask us to join them for tea rather than riddle us with bullets. On the surface, Turkish Kurdistan is really very quiet and trouble-free. Generally, the only evidence of its being under martial law is the army road-blocks and a few bullet-holes in the road signs. The situation, however, underlines the fact that our work can be curtailed by politics even in Turkey today and that the political situation can change rapidly anywhere. We have been attempting to assess the possibilities of collecting both in Iran and Syria for some time. It must be understood that collecting is not quite the same as merely travelling or visiting as a tourist and that our incomprehensible activities can be regarded with great suspicion. There is no problem in travelling through Iran but we have now satisfied ourselves that there is no hope whatsoever of travelling where we want and doing what we want, as long as the present situation persists. Syria was quite another matter and we were equally satisfied that we should be able to include it in our 1988 journey until recently when Britain broke off diplomatic relations. Things might well have changed again by 1988 but we shall always be influenced by the games governments play with each other. People, by the way, are much the same everywhere.

A SEED BANK FOR THE FUTURE  A sudden change in the political situation meaning that a previously accessible area suddenly becomes inaccessible would be an arguable reason for storing seed. When I was in Iran many years ago, it would have been simple to make large seed-collections from such species as Fritillaria kotschyanana and F. gibbosa, Trichodesme aucheri and T. incanum, Iris demavendica and many others, to say nothing of Dionysia spp. How exciting to be able to produce the possibility of raising fresh stock of these now. However, I must confess that we are more motivated by a parsimonious dislike of waste. Our original concept was only to list seed freshly collected as soon as we could arrange to do so. This is still our aim but we do sometimes find ourselves in a position of having been fortunate in making an extremely good collection of a desirable item and finding ourselves with an ample surplus. To destroy this annually would not only be painful for us but we feel criminally wasteful. On the other hand, we do not want to disappoint customers by supplying material of a lower standard or seed which may no longer be viable. What we have decided to do is to give you full freedom of choice based on all the facts. In every case, we state the precise date on which the collection was made -so please do read these- and have tried to briefly emphasise the fact that the seed is not from the current year by putting "SB coll." (seed-bank collection) against every stored item. Storage has been by the rather crude method evolved at the Kew Seed Bank of simply placing the seed in a sealed container with silica gel to absorb surplus atmospheric moisture and storing below freezing-point. Nothing complex -you can do it yourself and we know several customers do. I cannot write from personal experience regarding results from stored seed. I can quote Dr Peter Thompson, "former head of physiology" at Kew: "seed has a ten-year life kept in the fringe in a plastic, silica gel-filled box and up to twenty-five years in the freezer." He does not convince me and my question would be "Which seeds?" We have no plans at present, however, for listing 25 year old seed. We only aim to extend availability over a few years. Friends we have discussed the matter with and who have experience of such stored seed have been reasonably reassuring. For instance, Ron McBeath at the RBG Edinburgh reports that he has sometimes had better germination from stored Primula seed than from fresh sowings! It is worth trying but, personally, I should try to make sure that I acquired species I particularly wanted from the current year's collections; in any case, there is not always enough to store.

MAD GREEKS IN THE STEPPE OF COLORADO

We all have the self-styled mad Greek of Colorado, our very good friend, Panayoti Kelaidis, to thank for persuading us forsake S.W. Asia for the Central Rockies in 1987. We shall feel quite at home as the vegetation is very similar but with so many new genera we shall drift at sea. Penstemon, Phlox and Eriogonum will doubtless create many problems in supplying you with names and there will be a great increase in unidentified collections. However, we shall have the luxury of an excellent botanical library at Denver Botanic Gardens and we hope the opportunity to use the herbarium at Laramie. We shall be restricting our travels to Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and
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Montana -vast areas with more than enough exciting species to keep us busy from June to September. From 21 September to 15 October, 1987, we shall be based on the East Coast, mainly to organise collections but we also hope to fit in some lecture engagements and meet some customers and friends. The 1987 list should materialise in November again.

DUE TO A COMPUTER ERROR....... Several friends have suggested that we need a computer to assist us. Our brains, card-filing and field-notebook systems are generally equally adequate and more portable. However, output is just as dependant on input as it would be in the other case. Last year I called Terry Hatch "Terry Jones" (an equally good gardener). This year you will find the curious aberration of a collection of Anemonella thalictroides (163.000); it should be Isopyrum thalictroides (603.000). It is all due to a defect in my soft-ware.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, SHERBORNE, DORSET, ENGLAND, UK

WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS, we have been able to bring you an extremely exciting list based on North American collections. As we mentioned last season, we must blame (or thank) Panayoti Kelaidis for persuading us to spend last season collecting material in the Rocky Mts. and the adjacent areas. Panayoti, the ‘steppe-father’ of rock-gardening in the Rockies, is internationally renowned for actively promoting interest in this area and its plants. He successfully sold us the idea of collecting there; it is now up to us to sell you the results.

We are, on the whole, pleased with the list, which offers a broadly representative range of the plants of the region. Of course, we had a great deal help in arranging it all. Gwen & Panayoti Kelaidis provided an indispensable 'base-camp' for us in their basement and were unfailingly supportive and helpful throughout our time with them, in spite of the fact we landed ourselves on them initially, a few days before the birth of their first child (mother and daughter, Eleni, still "doing well"!). Sandy & Bill Snyder became our guardian angels, helping with all the early problems of buying a vehicle and insuring it, all in record time. So many people helped in so many ways. Marty Jones and Andrew Pierce advised on the Mosquito Range; without Stan Metsker we should never have found Elk Park on Pike's Peak; Ellen Wilde took us on a whistle-stop tour of some of the best sites around Santa Fe. To these and many others we should all be grateful. Beyond the mountains, we were more on our own but fortunately the natives were friendly. The Navajo nation has not evolved freedom-fighters so we had no army checkpoints to discourage 'terrorist' activity. While everyone in Wyoming seems to drive a pickup truck with a gun-rack along the back of the cab, you soon learn they are going to be just as helpful in an emergency as any Turkish truck-driver -a little less overwhelming in their enthusiasm to offer unsolicited help perhaps, though one rancher at Whiskey Gap spent a great deal of time trying to locate Calochortus capsules for us! While there are no great nomadic tribes and the Plains Indians can no longer follow the herds of bison, the 'snow-birds' follow the sun -a gentle race of elderly people, often waiting in the mountain areas for their next social security check so that they can fill-up the tanks of their thirsty R.V. and move south-wards or, perhaps, they will just spend the money on sugar to keep their humming-bird feeders full. Many of the travellers we met were interested in the local flowers and what we were doing. Some just enjoyed them; one pressed them -Ella actually actively collected, filling the shower-room of their large motor-home with an assortment of Artemisias, Cacti and even a large Shepherdia, all with a generous amount of their native hillside attached. The shower was obviously not usable for its original purpose; her husband, John, was remarkably indulgent! Yes, we met some fine people! Even if at times we also felt more remote than one can ever feel in Europe or Turkey -it's a big country!

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?

Who are these ‘agents provocateurs’ of the gardening world -these crypto-taxonomists and closet-botanists determined to erode our labels? We were recently subjected to an oblique attack by these subversive elements lurking under our raised-beds -the anarchists of the alpine-plant world. In the Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society, Vol. 54 No.4 (December, 1986) p. 348, you will find some comments on a plant which received an Award of Merit under the name Alkanna incana. The writers infer that plants raised from our seed distributed as A. acheriana "looks exactly like" A. incana (they don’t actually say it is wrongly named -a bit sneaky, eh?). The result of the publication of this was that several people wrote to us saying “I see A. acheriana should now be called A. incana". No it should not. Any confusion that exists is solely in the minds of the writers. We are certainly not so ignorant and foolish as to express any opinion on the plant which received the A.M. nor on material collected by anyone else. Our seed collection is supported by a herbarium sheet; this is deposited in the herbarium at the R.B.G. Edinburgh and was accessible to the writers of the article. The collection was determined as A. acheriana not only by ourselves but by the Flora of Turkey team, Dr Kit Tan and Dr Robert Mill, at the time working under Professor Peter Davis. It corresponds with sheets determined by Dr A. Buber-Morath, who wrote the account of
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the genus in the 'Flora of Turkey'; he states "ripe nutlets are indispensable for determination". I see no mention of nutlets in the A.G.S. Bulletin. It is difficult enough to identify many plants from out-of-character, cultivated material; to identify Alkanna without nutlets is impossible. Bring forth your nutlets -lay them squarely on the table and then we can talk about it. (A letter to the editor of the A.G.S. Bulletin asking for the opportunity to correct any mistaken impressions made by this article has not yet received a reply; it was written over nine months ago.) (Between ourselves this article was b*** s ***; we very much doubt if A. incana, a species from much further west than A. aucheriana, has ever been in cultivation; but, on the other hand, we have not seen the A.M. plant).

THE NAMES GAME
Appearances count for a lot. The Alpine Garden Society Bulletin appears to be "authoritative" and wraps much of its presentation up in pseudo-botanical jargon. Simply because it is a first-class gardening publication -probably the best specialist gardening periodical in the world, in fact -does not turn it into an inviolable authority on plant-names. There is no such thing - nor will there ever be one! Its pretensions to achieve the impossible, however, were manifest a year or so ago by a bizarre publication (of which, fortunately, we have seen no more of late) listing columns of "old names" and their supposed equivalent "new names". The fact that some of the "new names" were, in fact, the old names (hence valid on priority grounds) seemed to have escaped them. The Names Game, like other games, does have rules. There are names which are valid and names which are not. In many cases, both the "old" and "new" names listed by the A.G.S. were valid. It is simply a matter of opinion which one you want to use. Choosing which valid name to use is entirely different from determining the correct identity of a plant (which is the case with the Alkanna). The choice of which valid name will be used in any publication, whether it is this list, the A.G.S. Bulletin or the 'Flora Europaea', involves an editorial decision -making such a decision presupposes a knowledge both of the game and the players. In the same A.G.S. Bulletin as the Alkanna is dealt with, you will find (p. 356) that a plant grown from our seed received an A.M. under the name Centaurea conifera, when exhibited by Kew. We have listed this -and will continue to list this under the name, Leuzea conifera. The genus Leuzea DC. was proposed in 1805 by de Candolle for this taxon; over the past 192 years it has been generally accepted and is maintained in the 'Flora Europaea' (the "Holy Writ" of the A.G.S. Bulletin). Since 1805, a number of other taxa have been placed under Leuzea, several of which do not appear to have ever been placed under Centaurea. Nevertheless, "Kew" decided it wanted to use the Linnaean name. There is nothing "wrong" in this -simply a matter of opinion. It must have been a traumatic experience for the A.G.S. editor clutching the "Holy Writ" in one hand and a communication from "Kew", that somewhat nebulous pillar of the botanical establishment, in the other. Dropping the "Holy Writ" to free his forelock-touching arm, he chose Centaurea conifera. We have to make these awesome decisions continually. When we list that splendid, saxatile taxon (there is Rydberg's heucheriforme, do we use Engler's name, Boykinia jamesii, or Rafinesque's name, Telesonix jamesii? Then again, "Kew" might want to use the earliest one available -Torrey's name, Saxifraga jamesii. The A.G.S. Bulletin might follow them; lots of gardeners would rush to change their labels; the cognoscenti would shuffle along the show-benches, pontificating that "Of course, we are supposed to call this •••• now!" and "That's called •••• nowadays!!" They might feel obliged to change their labels (in fact, we suspect a lot of people enjoy this as an exercise in one-upmanship) -you do not. We try to use our common-sense and our knowledge of the players in this game, in suggesting an appropriate valid name. If there was a modern flora of the Rocky Mt. area, we should weigh the names in that against the names used in the new 'Utah Flora' and 'An Intermountain Flora' and we should try to edit them into an acceptable compromise, as we have done with 'Flora Europaea' and the 'Flora of Turkey' (they do not always agree, you know.). As far as Boykinia jamesii is concerned, we have three names available for the Pike's Peak taxon (there is Rydberg's Thereforon heucheriforme for another race); we have decided to go along with Stanley Welsh in his 1987 'A Utah Flora' and use the name Boykinia jamesii. He is a first-class botanist with a sensible, rather conservative approach and thinking along the lines adopted by the editors of the Intermountain Flora as well as the major modern European editors. Telesonix jamesii is currently more fashionable in the USA. This may be due to the influence of Professor W.A. Weber of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

WEBER AND THE ALTAI CONNECTION
1987 also saw the publication of Weber's 'Colorado Flora: Western Slope'. This is an excellent piece of work in the format of a field-guide, based on keys. Weber is also a first-class botanist with a life-time's experience of the Colorado flora. Why do we not use his names -they are all valid names and his book is superbly researched. Do you want us to list Hirculus platysepalus subsp. crandallii (Saxifraga flagellaris)? What about Tetraneuris brevifolia (= Hymenoxys acaulis var. caespitosa, we think) or Seriphidium vaseyanum subsp. wyomingensis (a taxon belonging to the Artemisia tridentata group)? Weber's line of thought is divergent from that of many mainstream
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botanists at present. He belongs to the group of botanists who argue for much narrower generic concepts. Other American botanists like Rydberg, Greene and Rafinesque thought along similar lines. So do many botanists in the USSR. Weber not only draws justifiable analogies between the flora of the Rocky Mts. and that of the Altai Mts. in the USSR but projects his thinking along the same lines as the botanists who deal with this area. Who is to say which line of thought is "correct" -there are no rights and wrongs, only differing opinions. Weber's concepts may well be the ones adopted in the distant future. We ourselves simply adopt a conservative approach -we do try to look after your interests! Though we must confess that we have always had the suspicion that Soviet botanists felt obliged to keep publishing new names in order to justify their positions - "What! Only ten papers and twenty-five new genera published last year, Igor? You'll have to do better than that!"

A DIP INTO THE GREAT BASIN
By far the best publication about the plants of the Rocky Mts. and adjacent areas, as far as gardeners are concerned, is, of course, the splendid 'Rocky Mountain Alpines' published in 1986 for the International Conference in Boulder. This is obtainable, incidentally, from both the A.R.G.S. and the A.G.S.; it is a bargain and no-one interested in the plants of the area should be without it. Gwen Kelaidis did an excellent piece of work in editing the names used in this; which is not to say we have slavishly followed it! The colour illustrations are often superb and will provide a colour-catalogue of many of the Rocky Mt. species in this list of ours. Of course, we have collected seed from many species not mentioned in this publication; just as you will find many species in this book but not in our list. Of the true Rocky Mt. species of interest to gardeners, there are very few not included. When one travels beyond the mountains into the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin, 'Rocky Mountain Alpines' only offers an appetiser of what the area has to offer. Our own time in the Great Basin was very short indeed and was largely based on an abortive attempt collect seed of Lepidium nanum, which had failed to set any seed in 1987 in the one place we knew about. It was sufficient to persuade us that we must return and this we plan to do in 1989. We should need to go earlier in the season; the area is so vast and the plant-populations often so thin and vestigial that we must try to locate colonies in flower. There are some marvellous plants beyond the mountains. You will find a few of them mentioned and illustrated in 'Rocky Mountain Alpines'; enough to whet anyone's appetite. There are many superlative Utah plants not mentioned at all (a few like Primula specuicola, Linum kingii, Penstemon bracteatus and P. duchesnensis, you will find in our list); practically nothing from Nevada is included. This is a key area for exciting material. There are many recently described species of great interest to the specialist grower and we have seen herbarium material of some incredible things. This Intermountain area has been the scene of intense botanical activity in recent years. The logistics of collecting seed from more than a few of these narrow endemics in any one season are complex -we cannot be in many places at the same time. However, no time should be lost in attempting the introduction of some of these plants to cultivation. The skills to grow them and maintain them are available, we are sure. After all, these equally narrow and specialised endemics from Iran and Afghanistan, the Dionysia spp., have been maintained in cultivation for over 20 years. We have learned a lot during that time. We try to make our activities complimentary to these developing skills and enthusiasms. We are trying to bring a degree of innovation, a sense of responsibility and professionalism to the long-established procedure of plant-introduction. It's for you to judge how successful we are in achieving this. Up till now your response has been more than favourable and encouraging to us. We are projecting our work into an indefinite future! God willing!

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD, 'BRYN COLLEN', FFOSTRASOL, LLANDYSUL, DYFED, WALES, UK DECEMBER, 1988

BASE-CAMP IS ESTABLISHED
Yes, this is the same 'Jim & Jenny Archibald', long resident in the impenetrable obscurity of 'Sherborne, Dorset England' (our mail really did reach us!) and now established in what we hope is the equally impenetrable obscurity of rural W. Wales. 'My God, what an address!!! exclaimed one American friend; we assure you it is quite straightforward compared to many Welsh addresses. We only ask you to try to spell it correctly, not to pronounce it. Even if you are not altogether accurate, Welsh post offices seem remarkably efficient at deciphering the mangled versions of Welsh place-names which usually appear on mail from foreign countries, like England. Truth to tell, the Welsh are not always particularly efficient themselves and letters from such Welsh institutions as our suppliers of water and electricity usually have various letters transposed, the 'F', the 'L' and 'S' being particularly unpredictable in their degree of proliferation. We only ask you to do your best! Be assured your order is almost certain to reach us.
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THE SITE OF OUR BASE-CAMP lies to the far West of Britain, on the North-facing slope and near the base of one of those little Welsh valleys which plunge steeply down from the uplands. 'Bryn Collen' sits into the side of the hill, at an altitude of 220m, 20m above the valley bottom, where the little stream of Nant Collen runs. This would appear to mean Hazel Stream and there are indeed still many Corylus avellana along its banks. The site was named by our predecessors after the stream and means 'Hazel Hill' but the old name, which we were tempted to restore, is more interesting: Bachyrhew Bach. The name could rather improbably be translated as 'Little, little of frost' but our neighbour tells us that a student of older Welsh told him that 'bach' as well as meaning little was also used for a crooked finger. Hence, the name means 'Little Crook of Frost' or 'Little Frosty Bend' - somewhat less suburban than 'Hazel Hill'! Here we have just over 4 acres of land (1.7 hectares) most of it gently sloping north-facing pasture but with over half an acre of sheltered, wooded marshland around the stream in the valley-bottom. While doubtless part of the land will prove to be a frost-pocket, the fact that frost lies late on N. slopes and plants start to grow correspondingly late will counteract this and we hope will prove an advantage rather than a disadvantage. The coastal climate of W. Wales is mild and we are quite near the coast but far enough away from it to escape the force of the westerly gales which tear in full of salt-spray. All in all it might be an interesting place to grow plants, if we ever have the time! At present, our neighbour's cattle graze the pasture and we can enjoy the massed displays of Galanthus nivalis, followed by Narcissus obvallaris, followed by Hyacinthoides non-scripta! To say nothing of unexpected pleasures such as Lilium pyrenaicum here and there along some roadside banks.

Our plans for the next two years are made and we hope they will allow a little time to play with the land here but, next season, we intend to be off quite early to the American West. This season, then, was our last chance for three years to try to bring together as much European and Turkish material as we could in a short space of time. If our plans mature to reality, there will be no new material from either Europe or Turkey before 1991 and, even then, there are some nebulous possibilities for that distant year which would again preclude further collections from these areas. We wanted to try this season to collect enough seed of enough items to be able to carry forward a list of seed-bank material (as we have done this year with 1987 N. American collections) which can be made available in both 1989 and 1990 lists. We have been successful up to a point but the early -snow in Austria deprived us of much material from the E. Alps. Our collecting-season has, therefore been severely squeezed from both ends in 1988. Establishing 'base-camp' here took us up till June. Fortunately we were able to find a property which we could move in to with a minimum of trouble but re-assembling what belongings we had retained during the more nomadic years after 1983, when we started travelling in search of seeds, took quite some time. Before leaving to go abroad in 1988, we also had to try to organise working space so that we could deal with the seed on our return and prepare this list for you. We now have an excellent office and work-room arranged with adequate space to deal with preparation and storage of seeds and despatch of orders. While such arrangements might be considered a necessity by most people, they come as something of a luxury to us and, even with adequate facilities at home, we shall, of course, still have to do a great deal of our work in cramped circumstances in caravans, hotel rooms, backs of Land Rovers and tents, when in the field! The real luxury, however, is the permanence of our base. Although, most of you will not be aware of it, every year we have had to pack everything up and store it before we went off collecting. When we came back, it all came but again. It was like moving house twice a year! At least it instilled us with a great deal of discipline and adaptability. Now the books and the typewriter and the card-files (to say nothing of our personal possessions) can all stay where they are to await our return. All this upheaval and novel domesticity occupied a great deal of time in 1988 and, looking back, we wonder when we might have extricated ourselves from it to go off collecting seed last season, had we not had a definite commitment - a date in Turkey.

ARCHIBALDS ADVENTURE HOLIDAYS were not planned as such. We have up till now done our utmost to avoid becoming involved in the package-tour business. Taking groups of starry-eyed people between 4-star hotels in air-conditioned buses, occasionally looking at pretty wildflowers, is not our idea of either business or pleasure. However, when our old friends, Dr Hans and Helga Simon, asked us to go to Turkey with a few members of the ISU, of which Hans is currently president, we did give the matter some thought. The ISU is an organisation for those involved with herbaceous perennials professionally, both in botanic gardens and nurseries, and we felt that they might be prepared to tolerate a little inconvenience to see such plants in the wild and also that the possibility of having to explain that this plant is called a Campanula (or, even worse, "Look! The Three-Toothed Bellflower") might be remote.

On the contrary, they struck terror into our ignorant hearts, as they strode across hillsides with specimens of diminutive Cruciferae, Umbelliferae, Compositae and Leguminosae - "Which Astragalus is this?"; "Is this Jurinella moschus subsp. moschus or subsp. pinnatisecta?" Having succumbed to Hans' persuasion, we flew out to N.E. Turkey with 30 (the original "few" - estimated at 12 or so - having grown) German, Swiss and Austrian ISU
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members, all having been duly warned of the possible 'hardships' likely to be encountered, in the way of small-town hotels, food and bad roads. There is, however, a great difference between a bad road and no road at all: two days before we landed at Trabzon, a few thousand tons of earth slid down the mountains near Macka and the road to the Zigana Pass and the interior disappeared. The fact that 6 buses, lorries without number and about 200 villagers also disappeared came second in our selfish minds to the fact that we had to get 30 Europeans across the Pontus Mts. to a hotel, which might no longer be expecting them, in an afternoon. This was actually accomplished (as such things often can be in Turkey) in spite of the resistance of the Turkish drivers of our three Ford Transits (whose initial unwillingness to experiment with the more exciting side-roads was at least cured early), the Traffic Police (conspicuous by their absence) and the Turkish telephone system (as reliably unreliable as ever). We shall not bore you with details of our hurried journey. In the ten days we spent with them, our companions were extremely fortunate in the weather they experienced and in the scale and range of flowers they saw. We should be very fortunate to be able to repeat that journey: whole hill-sides of *Paeonia* *arietina*, *Rhododendron* *smirnowii* and *R. caucasicum* at their peak of flowering; high meadows full of *Lilium* and *Geranium*; even the last, high, highest of the bulbs, like *Tulipa armena* and *Fritillaria latifolia*, in full flower in early July. All this interspersed with a ration of 'adventures' ('You must have one adventure every day!' said Karin Schatzberg), culminating in the great adventure in search of *Lilium kesselringianum*. Having located and photographed this, we returned to find that heavy rainfall had rendered our 'road' almost impassable. This road to the 'yaylas' behind Ardunc, is one of the most evil in the world. We turned back on it during a thunderstorm in 1986 -even Land Rovers, with four-wheel drive, cease to operate in a controlled fashion when each tyre has accumulated a 3 inch coating of liquid glue. The three Transits had to be manhandled back through the glutinous mud, with the result that everyone was generously plastered with filth. This apparently was considered the most successful adventure "This has been a wonderful day!" said one of our victims.

"COUPLE'S MIDLIFE CRISIS" might well have been an apt description of our days as leaders of the ISU group in Turkey but, in fact, it was how a headline-writer of the 'Chicago Tribune' chose (don't ask us why!) to head-up an article about our seed-collecting by Sandra Ladendorf: "Seeds of Change - Couple's midlife Crisis leads them to hunt and save rare and exotic plants." You can see why we are usually as opposed to newspaper publicity as we are to leading tours to Turkey! The trouble is that we are a very naive and gullible pair, totally unable to say 'No' to our friends. Many of you will know Sandra as Vice President of the American Rock Garden Society but she is also a journalist and asked very persuasively if she could write about our activities for 'The Christian Science Monitor'. What she did not tell us was that her article might be syndicated. It subsequently appeared in a host of local newspapers, not only throughout the USA but in S. Africa, New Zealand and Heaven knows where. Not only did we have Sandra's article to contend with in the USA but there was also one in Britain by Anna Pavord, who writes "for 'The Independent'. The fact that we are dedicated readers of 'The Independent' and have always both thought and said complimentary things about Anna's writing, once again made us 'an easy touch'. As a result of all this publicity, we have had hundreds and hundreds of letters - many quite delightful, many extremely interesting and all emphasising how very pleasant and friendly most people are. If, by any chance, this is read by any of the hundreds and hundreds of people who have not received a personal reply from us, we can only say 'Thank you for the kind letter'. This also applies to many of you closer to our activities, who have written to let us know about the germination and progress of collected seed. Some of your remarks have been included in this list but if yours are not among those it does not mean they have been of less value to us. Thank you all very much. Our seed-lists are very esoteric affairs and we wish to keep them that way. There is no point in our seed going to gardeners who are not yet experienced enough to give it a fair chance. In this respect mass publicity is of no value to us and we should much rather that competent growers find us than we should try to attract them. The propagator at one botanic garden might speak to the propagator at another; one amateur specialist might mention our list to another. In this way, we hope that it might be possible for the seed we collect to reach those most likely to be able to grow it and to maintain the resulting plants in cultivation. We are reaching the stage where we can feel with reasonable certainty that someone, somewhere is going to be able to grow almost anything we might collect.

**A SINGLE SOUR NOTE** appeared among the thousand or so letters written either to ourselves or the newspapers concerned. To have received only a single critical letter was surprising to us and we are encouraged that the more voluble and aggressive 'conservationists' must be becoming very much better informed about matters, which they were all too anxious to oversimplify in order to express definite opinions without a knowledge of reality. Thomas Alexander (Hull, England) asked "if consideration has been taken of the ecological damage resulting from the removal of the reproductive capabilities of hundreds of plants in fragile alpine environments." Disregarding, the inaccurate and emotive clichés 'damage' and 'fragile', of course we consider the ecological impact. While we
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are not so foolish as to argue that collecting some seed might have no ecological significance whatsoever, the impact is so trivial as to be impossible to quantify. If we visited the same square yard of hillside every year to collect seed from the same plants, our influence might be noticeable in that small area. We do not do this but even if we did our lives are short. Nature is prolific (we can assure Mr Alexander that we have never found it necessary to collect seed from "hundreds" of plants) and both the plants and seed are important food-sources for a multitude of insects, rodents and grazing animals -we are very insignificant and unimportant predators! Mr Alexander goes on to complain "the seed packets do not even have growing instructions" (nor do they have coloured pictures on them, Mr Alexander) "implying that they themselves haven't cultivated the plants" (in many cases, very true; we have probably grown more of them than most people, however. We omit the comments about "a profitable market" but would be pleased to refer Mr Alexander to our Tax Inspector) "...why don't the Archibalds cultivate the flowers for their seeds, instead of plundering the Rocky Mountains and Turkey for their stock in trade?" I think Mr Alexander has failed to understand what we do or why we are doing it; as long as all of you who support our collecting understand, that is what matters.

ATTILA LIVES ON
This talk of "plundering" brings us to a sad story on which to finish. About the same time as we received the letter from Thomas Alexander, we were asked by Judy Sellers, Vice Chairman, Endangered Species, Horticulture Committee, Garden Club of America, for some reliable, personal information regarding the large-scale, commercial collection of bulbs in Turkey: "Do you see much of this going on? Are the wild areas being depleted?" Until this year, our answer would have been "No" to both questions. However, when we paid a visit to the archaeological site of Cavustepe near Van, in order to see the very charming, elderly man who is the caretaker, we were met by an equally charming young man, who turned out to be his son. We explained that we had visited his father on previous occasions, when we had come to see Iris paradoxa var. choschab growing in splendid profusion, simply because grazing animals were kept off the site. "Yes, the 'zanbagh'," he said and then told us with some pride, "This year my father had a letter from Mr Attila at the University. He asked him to send 2000 plants of the 'zanbagh' for medicine." Is this the same Attila who worked with Professor Peter Davis of Edinburgh in 1950 and with Professor Huber-Morath of Basel in 1951 and 1954? When we were in Turkey with the ISU, we heard that a large number of bulbs of Fritillaria albiryana had also been removed this year. These are specialised species of specialised habitats; their location in the wild requires specialised botanical knowledge or access to botanical records. They can only be marketed by a specialist dealer. With so much specialisation about, there is obviously no room for responsibility.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD DECEMBER, 1989

STRIKING THE MOTHER-LODE
If you travel in the more remote areas of the American West, you can still find a lingering flavour of former days. It is still a land of opportunism, rather than of opportunity. The latter often only exists in the optimistic minds of those involved. The talk in the cafe in Dinosaur, Colorado, was about the drilling at Currant, Nevada -about how many feet a day they were going down at Currant. It was all happening at Currant - definitely not at Dinosaur. Anyone who has driven through Currant - and there are not very many of us - would be surprised that anything was happening or ever had happened at Currant. While the great Copper Pit at Ruth no longer produces copper and the smelters at nearby McGill stand idle and rusting, there was a definite feel of a boom happening or about to happen in Nevada. Ely was full of pickup trucks with Wyoming or even Alaskan plates. A superfluity of mobile drilling-rigs stood around and a helicopter chartered from a Salt Lake company, took off from the car-park of the Ely Motel 6 every morning at 5 a.m. Whether playing the tables and slots in Vegas or Reno or gambling for higher stakes in the mining business, it has always been boom or bust in Nevada. Historically, there has been considerably more bust than boom involved in both activities but that never seems to deter the hopeful. To the West, in California, today's gold-prospectors operate in a lower key and a more civilized ambience. There are still plenty people panning for gold, even if only as a weekend amusement. The more serious have staked claims and a sluice yields enough gold-dust for them to subsist without too much effort if they are lucky. It is also quite a popular occupation with the snow-birds, those elderly drop-outs who follow the sun in their luxurious motor-homes -"You wanna get that guy in the Winnebago along there to show you the pictures of his nuggets." When we 'phoned Wayne Roderick from Nevada to tell him that we were about to return to California and descend on him once again, he replied "Great. You're going to be just about right. Calochortus albus should be dropping its seeds about now up in the Mother Lode."
BULB-GROWERS BONANZA
Wayne was quite literally referring to the rich gold deposits in Tuolumne Co., along Italian Bar Road in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada, where they still take gold from the South Fork of the Stanislaus River. We thought at the time he was speaking figuratively of some amazing and numerous colony of Calochortus, a rich vein in their distribution, where we could strike it lucky with an outstanding seed-collection. He might well have been. There is no denying that California is as much a land of riches for the plant-hunter as it was for those early immigrants who struggled for months, if not years, across the plains and mountains and deserts to reach it. When we stayed with Panayoti and Gwen Kelaidis in Denver in 1987, we told them that we might return to North America in 1989 but would start from California. Panayoti replied "Once you've been collecting in California, you won't want to come back here again!" While this is not the case, we can understand now what he meant. Also in 1987 we had a brief and cryptic note from Wayne: "You are coming to the USA and not to California?" We know he is biased but we take his point. In the American West, the Rocky Mts. are a rough equivalent to Switzerland for flowers. Of course, there are places like Pike's Peak or the Mosquito Range with their restricted endemics but, as a generalization, when you have seen one area, you have seen them all. Over on the West Slope and down into the high, dry areas of the Colorado Plateau and Great Basin, you are into connoisseurs' collecting country, where you could spend a lifetime searching out remote and restricted colonies of relic species and specialized endemics, subsisting at the limit of survival in the harsh adversity of the conditions there. This is a land where disappointment is likely to predominate over elation. California combines the best of both worlds: a land of extraordinary diversity both in its climate and structure, resulting in an exceptional range of species, many of them more or less confined to this State. Moreover, many are now thriving and diversifying so that there is a feeling of active evolution proceeding in many genera. For the bulb-enthusiast, the specialist in 'monocots', this is the place. California is not only the centre for Calochortus, Erythronium and the Brodiaea group but it is an important secondary centre for more widespread genera like Fritillaria, Allium and Lilium. Over the past three years we have not listed a vast amount of new material to excite the bulb-grower. This season there is an exceptional range of material for the bulb-grower, who we hope will greet this list with cries of 'Eureka!'

AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK
It would have been impossible for us to visit this area and bring you such an extensive range of Californian material without the vast amount of help given to us by Wayne Roderick and John Andrews. Even if we had been able to collect the seeds without them, this list would be full of question-marks and 'sp.' California is a very large state and it is out of the question for anyone to acquire more than a superficial knowledge of its flora in a single season. Wayne, who worked at the University Botanic Garden at Berkeley for many years and later was in charge of the garden at Tilden Regional Park, is now retired -or 'retarded' as he likes to put it. He has an encyclopaedic knowledge of the Californian vegetation based on a lifetime of growing and collecting. For many years he has distributed a list of wild-collected seed and has probably done more than anyone else to introduce Californian species to wider cultivation. More recently John Andrews, an entomologist at University College Berkeley, has been collecting and sending out an exchange-list of seeds. While both of them have a wide knowledge and interest in plants, John's personal enthusiasm inclines towards alpines, while Wayne is dedicated to 'monocots.' Between them they organized our time in California much to our -and we hope your -advantage. The fact that they were both actively collecting in California and distributing seed was actually one of the factors which made us decide not to visit the state in 1987. When we explained this to another American friend, he said 'O.K. but how many of us have the chance to get hold of their seed.' This is very true. Each of them runs about fifty copies of their seed-lists. Unlike us, they are not trying to make a living from seed-collecting; they do not want to spend much of their lives packeting and distributing seed; what they are doing at present keeps them quite busy enough. On the other hand, like ourselves, they feel "We want to get this stuff around" -widely distributed and established in cultivation in the hands of skilled, enthusiastic and understanding growers. As you will see, we've had three parties in the field this season! While we were off 'wasting our time' in the drought-ridden lands to the East, Wayne and John were picking off such Californian endemics as Fritillaria pluriflora and F. purdyi, Erythronium multisepaloides and Allium hoffmanii. If it were not for them, such species would not appear here. Not only have we benefitted from organisation, advice and seed, we also had a great deal of help from Wayne in cleaning our much-expanded range of seed-collections. If your Penstemon seed is a cleaner than usual, thank Wayne -"Give me that here, I'll get that clean for you." We have never met a more rapacious and insatiable seed-cleaner. Thanks a lot to you both.

COUNTING THE COST
Neither Wayne nor John really counts the cost of their seed-collecting. Wayne will make a day-trip of several hundred miles often for a single item; John, who is off every weekend during the season, told us he drives about
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20,000 miles a year visiting localities. He has just bought a new four-wheel drive pickup truck to make life easier during his collecting-trips. We very much doubt if many of those who receive seed from such dedicated collectors really appreciate the trouble and expense involved in its collection. How many people do you know in London prepared to drive up to Caithness for a collection of *Primula scotica* seed or run down over a long weekend to collect some alpine-seeds around Mont Cenis? We never fully appreciated the time, trouble and expense involved in collecting such *N. American species as Epilobium rigidum or Hulsea nana* when we received them from Jim McPhail and Bob Woodward in the 1970s. Now we know. Over a long period in the 1950s and 1960s Carleton Worth made lengthy, self-financed trips from Ithaca, N.Y., to the Rockies and the Great Basin -every year during his vacation from university. Sometimes his journeys were not very rewarding -"another dry season" was often seen as an excuse for Worth's incompetence when he had failed to collect some hoped-for species. Now we understand and sympathise. We certainly do have to count the cost, not only of travelling but also of dry seasons. This cost is paid by those who support our work by purchasing our seed. We are sure this is a good thing and that most people appreciate something they have paid a fair price for more than something they get for nothing. It is in the interests of the plants that you may be inclined to take just a little more care of the seedlings! Only about 50% of the price you pay for the seed is involved in its collection. About 25% of the price is involved with this list : not only the costs of printing and postages but in the cost of providing you with all the field-data and the research involved in verifying names and giving you snippets of information about each collection. It all takes a long time but we think it is well worth it. If we reduced the price of the seed and sent you a single-sheet names-only price-list (precisely like the numerical check-list you will receive with your seed-order), not only would our work become less meaningful but it would also become scientifically valueless. Our hope is always to supply the needs both of the specialist amateur grower and of the scientifically-orientated botanical collection. We should like to see them coming closer together and we hope we can contribute in a small way to an attitude and purpose common to both.

**1991 AND ALL THAT**

We seem to be approaching the end of the page allowed for this rambling chatter without having said very much. Every year we jot down a few notes of topics and anecdotes to include in this newsletter and every year most of them remain unmentioned. This year we can tell you that you are unable to read about how Jenny was not bitten by a baby rattlesnake and how we were not struck by lightning. We cannot include the paragraph about the numerous forest fires during 1988 and 1989 pointing out their benefits both to the vegetation and the tourist-trade for the areas concerned. We cannot tell you about the Oregon State Troopers curious about our seed-collecting in the Coast Ranges along the Oregon/California line, though their real interest they explained was in "another sort of botanists" engaged in the cultivation of (another sort of) pot-plants in the mountains. In the same negative vein, we cannot tell you precisely what we shall be doing between now and spring 1991, because we do not know. We can tell you that we shall not be visiting Turkey or North America before then. We are trying to reorganise the pattern of our lists so that we can spend some of the summer of 1990 on our land here in Wales and also arrange to have a new list ready for the 6th International Rock Garden Plant Conference at Warwick University from 6 -11 April, 1991. We regard these rare events, held every ten years, as of great importance for the opportunity to meet and talk to people one very seldom sees. We shall be there with a small exhibit of photographs and pressed herbarium specimens to provide a focal point where we may be able to meet those of you may attend this. More of this in 1990, when we shall send-out another communication and list. Between now and then, the only definite date in our diary is the Birmingham Study Weekend at Solihull on 31 March and 1 April, 1990. John Page who is organising this on the theme 'The World of Bulbs', has turned this into an important event with an amazing assemblage of speakers: Wayne Roderick is coming from California; Milan Prasil from Czechoslovakia; there are such British classics as Chris Brickell, Jack Elliott, Derek Fox, Chris Grey-Wilson and Brian Mathew as well as, 'as they say, yours truly' (What a nauseatingly obsequious and effete expression). Notes re: NORTH AMERICAN SEEDS 1989 Unless otherwise mentioned, seeds in Section I have been collected in the United States of America by Jim & Jenny Archibald during 1989. In cases where we have been unable to make a fresh collection during 1989 but we have a sufficient supply in our seed-bank, then we are making available seed from our previous visit to America in 1987. Our seed-bank was instituted in 1984 as a simple storage system for seed from particularly good harvests. Storage procedure is similar to that used by some commercial producers of seed and the centres involved with extensive seed-banks, such as at Kew in England and Fort Collins in Colorado. Under such conditions of low temperature and low humidity, viability of many seeds can, in theory, be preserved indefinitely. In all cases, however, we provide the precise date of collection for all wild-collected material, so that an informed choice can be made.
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REFERENCE NUMBERS are our field-numbers and do not run in numerical order in this list, which presents our collections in alphabetical order so that members of each genus appear together. At the end of the list, we provide a separate check-list of the numbers in the numerical order of collection to facilitate identification of the seed-packets, which carry only the field-number.

NOMENCLATURE has required some editorial decision. Where possible it follows the 'Intermountain Flora' but this is a very long way from being completed. Stanley Welsh's 'A Utah Flora' (1987) is superlative and a model for a single volume flora. It has almost invariably been followed for taxa which occur in Utah. The names used in Robert Dorn's 'Vascular Plants of Wyoming'(1988) are used where taxa endemic solely to Wyoming are concerned but not necessarily for plants of a wider distribution. William Weber's 'Colorado Flora: Western Slope' is generally disregarded as we feel his predilection for excessive generic splitting is retrograde and of no advantage to those of us who use plant-names for their true purpose -simply as a reasonably efficient and acceptable labelling system for groups of naturally occurring living objects. As far as Californian species are concerned, we have had little alternative but to follow Munz' 'A Californian Flora' (1959). This is somewhat outdated, a little bit insular and often far from being functionally perfect when it comes to actually using it to identify material. Nevertheless, the format is excellent and it is difficult to see how the presentation of an encyclopaedic amount of information in a concise manner can be bettered. A revision of Jeppson's 'A Manual of the Flowering Plants of California' is now under way and it will be interesting to see in a few years' time if 'Munz' is actually dispensable. Our broad approach in all cases is conservative and we usually retain specific level for a taxon where there is disagreement about its appropriate status. Some names may prove incorrect and in cases of considerable uncertainty the name is preceded by '?'. Considerable efforts are made to distribute correctly named material but as only a short time elapses between collection and distribution and often material collected in fruit is inadequate for full determination, it is clearly impossible to be fully accurate. Where seed collected by someone other than ourselves is listed, the identity of the collector is provided and the name used will be the one provided to us by the person involved.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD

SEPTMBER 1990

BEST LAID PLANS proverbially often fail to come to fruition. Our plans are never in this category and usually tend to develop as we go along. The rather vague intentions, drawn from a pool of possibilities on which we try to run our lives, are frequently confounded by a change in circumstances. The policy of 'planned fluidity', which we have adopted when collecting, seems to percolate into our existence more and more. We had every intention, when we wrote the Newsletter accompanying our December 1989, List, to have a new list in your hands around the end of July or in early August at the latest. What might have been in this and how this might have been accomplished is now no longer relevant. No matter what we might have brought you this season, we think you will find a lot of exciting material in the present list; a surprising number of species have not been listed by us (nor by anyone else) previously and several, which we have listed before, have not appeared since 1984 or 1985. It is disconcerting how many years we have been sending out these annual lists! The main reason for the contraction of the gap between the 1989 and 1990 lists is that we are attempting to tighten up our schedule so that we can spend some time in the Southern Hemisphere. It is not easy to alter the routine from areas where the peak season for seed lies between June and August to ones where it occurs between December and February. We 'plan', if we dare use the word to do some collecting in S. America, during the latter period, 1990-91, with a list issued, we hope, in the following April -May. Who can say how near we shall come to realising our present intentions! Some of you may be reacting with the thought that S. America is becoming a little overexposed from a collecting viewpoint. If you are, we feel that you will be involved only with alpine-plants. We do cast our nets very widely and try to satisfy a very wide range of specialised interests; not so many of those who obtain seed from us regularly are concerned exclusively with the challenge of difficult and new alpine-house plants. Even those whose enthusiasm lies solely in this field should still be easily satiated. We are hardly talking about yet another trip to the Alpes-Maritimes or the Sierra Nevada; the area is incomprehensibly vast and the possibilities still little explored. We shall see what we can do to keep everyone interested in due course -when we have time to think about it. It is increasingly a struggle to prevent life running away with us -our short collecting trip to S. Europe in 1990 was by necessity one of the most compressed and intensive we have made. It had to be so as we were seeking early seed over an extremely wide area. It is obviously a much more expensive procedure to collect such diffuse material than it is to make peak season collections in July and August. With this in mind, we abandoned our Land Rover, now essentially retired and put out to grass, for one of its infant relatives, a little Rover Metro, hired from our local garage. In this we were able to zip up the mountain roads of Europe and speed along the autoroutes, autoroutes and autostradas with ease. Long wheel-base, diesel Land Rovers feel quite a home in Turkey among the belching black fumes of Turkish trucks crawling up to mountain passes but suffer embarrassment as misfits among the...
traffic of metropolitan Europe. This is not to say that there were not a few occasions when we felt deprived of the facilities offered by our old friend and there were one or two localities we felt it wiser not to attempt in 1990. Notwithstanding the limitations placed on our activities by using a conventional, hired vehicle, we suspect we shall be doing the same in S. America. When John Watson was collecting in Chile in 1971-72 he actually found a Land Rover to hire there - at horrifying expense we might add. His expenditure did not obviate the vehicle problems we all experience.

AT HOME ON THE HOUSE RANGE
In spite of the minor irritations -the odd cracked spring and the oil that seeps out insidiously - and, of course, the discomfort, we have never been left in a difficult situation because of our Land-Rover. It has, indeed, been a love-hate relationship. We have always experienced a definite feeling of security when using it. We came across an old letter from Larry Bailey of Seattle, Washington, recently where he remarks that he envied us our Land Rover when he went in search of Primula domensis in the House Range of W. Utah a few years ago. When we went in search of this species ourselves in 1989, we could not have echoed his sentiments more wholeheartedly. The House Range lies just N. of Highway 50 not far from the Nevada line. It has become a slightly busier road in recent years, since some journalist tagged it "the loneliest road in America", and you can buy stickers and buttons to impress your friends - "I survived -50-the loneliest road in America". If the writer had genuinely wanted to find a lonely road, he would have turned N. or S. on to one of the dirt roads which disappear into nowhere. Two of these give access to the House Range and we had set off with the intention of driving the loop between them. We might interpolate here that we had not done our homework and that the episode had resulted from our 'planned fluidity' policy; we happened to be passing and thought we might try to find the plant. I reckoned that if I could find Dionysias I could find P. domensis. Indeed that might have been the case as it rapidly became obvious that the limestone mass of Notch Peak was sliced into a vast, north-facing vertical cliff -an ideal habitat. The problem was that we could see no obvious means of access from the W. side. As it turns out, we were doing the thing the wrong way round and we might have been quite a long time in reaching the primula from that side! Anyway, it rapidly became an irrelevant line of thought. One of our tyres blew. No problem, it was soon replaced. The engine, having enjoyed a short rest, decided that it would not restart. Knowing the temperamental nature of VW's (we have now had a love-hate relationship with two of these as well), we handled the recalcitrance with amazing patience and gentleness. All to no avail. The battery reached the final stages of expiration. At this point, we were reaching our final possibility. There were a few yards of dirt road available before an incline started. If the engine did not fire at the first push, we had a long walk back to the 'Loneliest Road'. The temperature was well over 400°C (a lot over 100° F) -Jenny volunteered to push. It started. The points had simply been trying to weld themselves together: 'Damn fools. You don't put Japanese points in a German engine', said a Utah mechanic later as he replaced everything with Bosch parts. At the time, we did not wait to diagnose the problem and we were certainly not chasing primulas in the House Range without a spare tyre and with our engine acting up. The 'Loneliest Road in America' looked a very civilized, populous place when we at last returned to it. As you will find later in this list, John Andrews has succeeded where we failed and, after two high-powered trips to the Great Basin this summer, has returned with seed not only of the House Range primrose but of P. nevadensis.

CUPID UNCHAINED
During one of our all too infrequent transatlantic telephone conversations this summer, I heard briefly about John's hunt for the primrose. "Tell me," I said, "did you see anyone else at all when you were in the House Range." "No," replied John, "but there was a car parked near the entrance to the draw I hiked up." I was about to ask how thick the layer of dust on the vehicle was -entertaining some thoughts that it probably belonged to the last botanist who went to find P. domensis -when John added, "Probably hunters. The bow and arrow season has started." A chilling thought. Not only is there the possibility of being skewered by a steel shaft but no-one might find the remains for weeks - months - years? Definitely an over-reaction to one of the less publicised but by no means remote hazards of plant-hunting in the U.S.A., fostered by Fred and 'Boots' Case. My experience with them in Michigan, while being taken to visit one of Fred's favourite boggy haunts, immediately came to mind. We had found a vacant vehicle parked at the start of a woodland path, just as John had done. Prior to this I had been able to observe with a certain amount of detachment that there were a considerable number of Ramboesque figures clad entirely in camouflage clothing, walking around carrying some very sophisticated ironmongery and obviously prepared to impale any luckless herbivore around that day. "These guys shoot at anything that moves," said 'Boots'. Fortunately they appear to puncture each other's egos more frequently than those of the innocent. "Keep talking!" said Fred, "You should have been wearing something red -or orange!" Not wishing an end like Saint Sebastian, we conversed in artificially loud voices. "One of the farmers round here had to paint his cows,
added 'Boots'. "Paint his cows?" I asked. Rather tired of having his livestock prematurely kebabe, he had embellished each with the label 'THIS IS A COW'.

A CASE OF THATCHERITIS?
Fred Case is, of course, one of the most brilliant plantsmen in N. America. He is also a marvellously stimulating individualist and one of the most knowledgeable and entertaining lecturers on plants in the world. His talk at the 'International Rock Garden Plant Conference' at Warwick in April, 1991, will surely be a highlight of the event. "I'm not going," said Kath Dryden (a Vice-President of the A.G.S. - she'll probably change her mind!). "I only want to hear Fred Case. John Amand (who is also only interested in hearing Fred Case talk about Trilliums!) and I were going to drive up for the day to hear Fred but it is £60 each on the Wednesday because he's speaking." "No it's not," we said, "It's £15 more on the Wednesday for your dinner." "But we don't want the dinner," said Kath, "John and I will have to drive back home then." Hard luck, Kath. Pay-up or do without. What is somewhat disconcerting is that rather a lot of people we feel should be going to this event appear to be deciding to do without. The bottom-line has to be 'is it a good buy? The cost of the Conference for a couple would be £660; with travelling expenses and the odd drink or buying a few plants, you have to be looking at a figure approaching £1000; for delegates coming from the U.S.A. you can double this to cover air-fares -about £2000 for two or near £4000, unless Saddam Hussein commits suicide over the next few months. You can do a lot with an amount like this - have a holiday abroad to see the plants growing wild instead of listening to a lot of people talking about them! We were very enthusiastic about this Conference when we wrote our last Newsletter in December, 1989; we had every intention of putting up a small exhibit where we could chat with people. We have dropped the idea, on grounds of costs and time. We had to ask 'Is it worth it?' I do not even have to count my costs as I am speaking. Jenny's fee would be £330, we were going to have large colour prints to pay for and the trouble of bringing together, labelling and mounting herbarium material, we would have had to hire transport and pay £50 for the space to stage the exhibit. Adding it all up we were nearer £1000 than £500. Sorry. It is too expensive a public relations exercise. Those who want to speak to us will have to find us! I shall be around a lot of the time and Jenny will be lurking around the Show area. Do not for one moment think we do not sympathise with the organisers. It is a thankless task trying to strike the correct balance and an impossible one to suit everyone. We have no doubt whatsoever that for those who attend it will be a memorable event and be voted an overwhelming success. Amid the self-congratulation we shall be thinking of the multitude of specialists and expert growers whose only participation will be to have attended the Show. My own thoughts will be tinged with nostalgia for the first Conference I attended in 1961. This was held for one week in London and one week in Edinburgh, where I was a student. I could not afford to travel to London nor could I afford conference fees. I was a member of the Scottish Rock Garden Club but no-one ever asked to see my membership card or any other piece of paper when I attended lectures by people like Carleton Worth and Wilhelm Schacht. It was a historic occasion to me. Someone today who is in a similar position and who could not 'pay-up' would certainly have to do without. Even those who can afford to 'pay-up' are capable of doing some small calculations on the back of an envelope. Most people I know had expected that the fee would be nearer £200 than £300. We can all look at recent conferences fees, whether in the gardening world or outside it. £250 would seem to us a fair estimate, adding 10% compound for inflation and adding £50 for luck. We have heard a rumour being put about that the speakers are costing £100 per delegate on a break-even figure of 600 delegates. This is £60,000. We are perfectly able to work out what the speakers are costing. At a generous estimate -ludicrous in that would include speakers being costed for the entire conference fee each -we cannot see how their costs can exceed £15,000 -or £25 per head on 600 delegates, dropping to £18.75 on the 800 who should have been there. This would leave a £45,000 excess available for the baubles and gewgaws distributed at such events. Could it be that our charitable societies are imbued with the enterprise culture of the Thatcherite era and wish to make a profit? For that sort of excess they could have afforded some proper 'names' in the world of horticultural lecturers -like Roy Lancaster or John Kelly.

SEEDS COLLECTED IN NORTH AMERICA, JUNE-JULY, 1990, BY JOHN ANDREWS
Our good friend and companion for some of our time in the USA in 1989, John Andrews (Berkeley, California) has produced some material of outstanding interest -in spite of the fact he spent three weeks earlier in the season with Norman Stevens in Turkey. His hurried journey to the Great Basin was made mainly in the hope of collecting seed from one or two of the relic Primula spp. there. We failed to come up with any of these last season. John reached one of the sites he wanted to but found he was far too early this year. He may attempt an August collection of P. nevadensis and we hope we may be able to make it available in due course.********
John is not a man to be deflected from his intentions by the unpredictable climate and plant behaviour in the Great Basin. After his second visit to W. Utah this year -making what must have been a round trip of about 2500
km and climbing two mountains during the weekend Friday night to Sunday night -we can list his seed of two out of the three known Great Basin Primulas. Think of the effort put into making these collections when you sow the seed and -we hope -nurture the seedlings! They may be a challenge to grow but remember they are a challenge to collect.

1990 CULTIVATED SEED FROM NORTH AMERICAN SPECIES  The longer a species can be maintained and propagated, particularly from seed, under cultivation, the easier it is to grow -and the less relevant field data about its origins becomes. While selection starts as soon as your wild collected seed starts to germinate, we feel it is justifiable to retain numbers and data on the first generation of seed from parents of known wild origin. Beyond that it becomes pointless. The following is seed from good, professional British growers interested in developing bulbs suited to cultivation in European gardens. While this seed is of less importance to those who require full field-data for scientific purposes, it is to be recommended to anyone who simply wants 'growable' material. Results from these will be likely to be more vigorous than from wild collected material of the same species. This is all not to say that things have gone as far as in garden-stocks of species like *Crocus chrysanthus* or *C. sieberi*, which bear scant resemblance to the wild species!

NORTH AMERICAN UPDATE

Since we compiled the 1989-90 list of North American material in December, 1989, another volume of the 'Intermountain Flora' has appeared. This is entirely Dr Rupert Barneby's contribution on the Fabales -mainly Fabaceae (Leguminosae) -and, of course, includes *Astragalus*. As Dr Barneby had been kind enough to come up with rapid determinations on our herbarium material of these, all our intermountain collections of this genus are named in accordance with this new work. There are two alterations to naming, however, which we should have adopted had we known of them. *Cercis occidentalis* (11609 & 11670) is placed at varietal level under *C. canadensis*, as *C.c. var. orbiculata*; this seems good sense. In the genus *Lupinus*, Barneby distinguishes two taxa from the *L. breviflora* of Californian botanists: *L. tegeticulus* (essentially acaulescent with a densely packed caudex above ground) and *L. breviflora* (with a loosely branched, subterranean caudex and short, prostrate, developed stems). This is obviously quite a basic distinction from a horticultural viewpoint as well. Our Mt. Pinos collection (11696) should be placed under *L. tegeticulus* and we think (unfortunately herbarium material was not pressed of these) the other two can remain as *L. breviflora*. We have not had time to work out where 11733, listed as *L. iyallii*, might fit into Barneby's concepts of the *L. lepidus* group (the collection was made from just outside his area) but the Utah collection, 11350, remains *L. lepidus* var. *utahensis*, distinct in being stemless and the tiniest member of this terrifyingly complex group.

Apart from our collection 9019, listed as *Eriogonum ? soredium*, definitely not being this species (it is a form of the variable & widespread *E. shockleyi* -it was all wishful thinking), nothing particularly drastic comes to mind at present regarding misidentification of material listed from our 1987 and 1989 North American collections. This certainly does not mean to say that some terrible errors might not come to light; we are far from being infallible. We do, however, in the short time available for such activities, try to provide the most acceptable name according to current thinking for our collections. This always makes it wearisome when people, who have obviously done less homework than we have, fiddle about with names.

to current thinking for our collections. This always makes it wearisome when people, who have obviously done less homework than we have, fiddle about with names. The question of the use of the name *Phlox muscoides* is raised in the March 1990 Alpine Garden Society Bulletin: in our use of this name we follow Dorn's 'Vascular Plants Wyoming I' (1988), Welsh 'A Utah Flora' (1987) and Cronquist, Holmgren et al. 'Intermountain Floral' (1984). These are modern, easily accessible works and, if anyone is still not satisfied, the holotype specimens of *P. muscoides* and the synonymous *P. bryoides* are held in the British Museum. It is even worse when anonymous wise guys erase the name you have put on a collection. In our 1987 list, we quite clearly identified our collection 9310 as *Polemonium viscosum*. We are thrilled to see a well-grown plant of it beautifully illustrated (p.49 of the same AGS Bulletin) but why the caption "Polemonium sp.?"? On p. 44 we learn that the seed had produced "a plant which corresponded neither with *P. eximium* nor *P. viscosum." Obviously the crypto-taxonomists, about which we wrote some years ago, have emerged again. We are gratified that the (faceless) world authority on the genus *Polemonium* was present to condescend to examine material from one of our unworthy collections. It is a little sad to think that Robert Dorn, who has spent over 20 years living and working in Wyoming, and Earl Jensen, who actually lives within a few miles of this collection, have failed to find this new plant in the well-trodden Bighorns. One up for the Brits!

While our main aim is to offer you seed collected by ourselves, our lists would be much the poorer were it not for some additional material contributed by some friends in Britain and abroad. How else could we hope to bring you seed collected in Utah and Peru, Ruwenzori and the Chatham Islands, all in the same list? Our sincere thanks to them all: John Andrews (California, USA), Helen Barton (Devon, UK), Dinah Batterham (Dorset, UK), John Blanchard (Dorset, UK), Peter Chappell (Hampshire, UK), Paul Christian (Clywd, UK), Don Elick (Japan), Terry Hatch (Pukekohe, NZ), Mother Hilary & Sister Mary (Devon, UK), Bert Hopwood (Devon, UK), Henrik Zetterlund (Sweden), Dave Hoskins (Hampshire, UK), Hans-Erik Jensen (Denmark), Melvyn Jape (Surrey, UK), Will McLewin
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(Cheshire, UK), Helen Beaufort-Murphy (Peru), Karin & Jimmy Persson (Sweden), Norman Stevens (Cambridge, UK), Wayne Roderick (California, USA), Mike Tucker (Somerset, UK), Peter & Penny Watt (Hampshire, UK), Michael Wickenden (Kircudbrightshire, UK). We are most grateful to Professor P. and Dr P. Watt for some higher altitude collections made later in July in N. Italy and S.E. France.

CULTIVATED MATERIAL is only listed where it has been derived from plants of known wild origin, accompanied by a reasonable amount of field data. Even with first generation seed from cultivated wild material, a certain amount of selection has occurred (i.e. the ability to grow and set seed under garden conditions) and there is the possibility of hybridization. With successive generations raised from seed in cultivation, field data and the original collection numbers become increasingly irrelevant. Such cultivated seed, as well as wild seed from outside the area concerned here or wild seed with little field data, is listed separately. Apart from cultivated seed derived from our own collections, we include some material from other collectors. In all cases, the collector is specified, as is the cultivator (ex. hort.: from the garden of....) Unless otherwise mentioned, seed is collected by ourselves.

REFERENCE NUMBERS in this list for Europe, S.W. Asia and N. Africa are our permanent references for particular populations within the area. If we -or anyone else –re-collect a species from a particular locality, it is listed under the same reference number as previous collections. Seed packets carry only this reference number but as these six digit numbers run in both alphabetical and numerical order here, identification from this list is a simple matter. The five digit field numbers used ...apply only to that particular collection made on a particular date.

HELLEBORUS

We planned our 1990 journey to S. Europe to collect as comprehensive a series as possible of the European Helleborus species. It is extremely difficult to arrange to collect all the mainland species in a short time and in a single season so we are not displeased with the results. We knew we should be too late in the field to make a good collection of the extreme cut-leaved race of H. multifidus but we had hoped to be able to collect seed in the N. When we stayed with our old friends Dr Hans & Helga Simon on the way out, Hans thought we might be too late: "It is not so cold in the N. due to the Pannonic influence." He was right; the seed had gone. After that everything went well in spite of a season when flowering was poor and seed-set even poorer than we have seen previously. Having collected an unprecedented ed range of wild hellebore seed, we now have the problem of naming the collections. In 1979, I made a trip early in the season to see as many as possible of the S.E. European hellebores in flower. I was armed with Prof Tutin's account of the genus in 'Flora Europaea'. This was rapidly discarded with cries of 'Useless!' and 'Rubbish!' to take its place alongside such monumental and unworkable monographs as Wherry's 'The Genus Phlox' or Williams' account of Mertensia. The secret of success with such works is the knowledge that hardly anyone is going to use them to identify plants in the field; the dried plant on a herbarium sheet usually represents only a fraction of 1% of a particular population -even with ten sheets from a particular locality, which would be quite exceptional, you might have only 1% of the variation represented -so that it is very much easier to assign names to a few dried plants than it is to an extensive wild colony. Nevertheless, memories having mellowed aver the past decade and having become more suggestible with age, we set off sanguinely to identity our collections according to Brian Mathew's new monograph. Published in 1989, this is undeniably indispensable, attractively produced, impeccably researched and rich in information. The classification, set amid such excellence and presented in a convincing fashion with a dichotomous key and full descriptions, might easily delude those who have little or no experience of these plants in the wild that an idealistic fantasy is in fact reality. Brian is well aware that life is not so simple and is shrewd enough to counter such criticism by stating unequivocally in his foreword "...that there is no absolutely foolproof system of classification. So please, when reading through this work with a critical eye, spare a thought for the taxonomist who, at a fixed point in time on the constantly moving path of evolution, is expected to place all living things in perfect units with precise descriptions and indisputable names attached. Hellebores, to take but one example, do not conform!" Well, Brian is an honest man -there are few botanists who actually tell you that their classification is likely to be unworkable -and as an honest man has to be rated more highly than Profs Tutin or Wherry who leave you to find this out for yourself. Nevertheless, I balk at sympathy -the spare a thought for the poor old taxonomist bit with its hint of Kleenex and violins. I am a hard man. I am the one who has to go out and stick these names on the actual plants. To me this is like an aircraft designer telling a test-pilot as he steps out on the tarmac, "It's a great-looking 'plane! I've done my best with it but I'm pretty sure it will crash on take-off." Thank God taxonomists don't design aircraft.

Those of you who have invested £30 or so in this latest account are unlikely to take it kindly if we go crawling back to the discredited Professor Tutin classification, so we ruthlessly applied Brian Mathew's names. This involved ignoring the criteria he uses: Colour -not in theory applicable to seed collections but in reality irrelevant as we have never seen a colony of all-purple hellebores; Hairiness -only one collection had more than a minute pubescence along the veins beneath; Follicles -while there is no denying broad tendencies, it is usually possible to
find exceptions and in many cases it is a question of seeing what you want to see; Overwintering leaves -wishful thinking -it depends where the plants are growing (note illustration on p. 35 of said monograph where *H. orientalis*, for which overwintering leaves are diagnostic is shown without leaves which have overwintered!) Leaf toothing- fairly inconsistent; Leaf divisions - often unreliable but interesting (we made counts of the divisions on the least-divided and most-divided leaves we could find in a particular colony and these are given). How, then have we named these collections? Fortunately Brian has provided a useful map on p. 29 of his book. Using this enabled us to identify everything without recourse to the key or individual descriptions. It is all easier than we thought! Further comments on individual collections as we go along our way into Never-Never Land. No need to be too concerned over names; we have only collected from defined, geographically separated colonies which each have their own characteristics. We have really overstated the problem - and so has Brian Mathew - it only lies with one group, Section Helleborastrum. The other Sections are clearly defined and offer no problems at all.

**POSTSCRIPT**: Notwithstanding all our comments, you can be assured that seedlings from any of these collections will produce plants somewhat different from all the others - and possibly from each other. If you rid yourself of preconceptions, the seedlings should give you some idea of the variation of wild colonies and also of the problems confronting someone like Brian Mathew who tries to impose names on them. If the seedlings do not conform to your concept of the 'ideal', do not be disappointed. Raising such plants from wild seed is the only way most people can understand the wild plants. Open-pollinated garden-seed will be immediately 'contaminated' by cultivated material; hand-pollination of segregated clones starts the process of horticultural selection and will reinforce the 'myth' of the 'true' species as surely as the selective photographer or botanist distorts the reality of nature.

**NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD**

**JULY, 1991**

**ANOTHER DRY SEASON - ANOTHER WET SEASON** "Is this your first visit to Chile?" asked Dr Marticorena, when we visited him at Concepcion in March. "What a pity. It has been such a poor, dry season. You should have been here when we have had a wet year." In January Alberto Castillo had written to us that his collecting trip in N.W. Argentina, which, for the immense region covered, was a disaster "... just barren land for the rains were late for a long time ... I am afraid not much better luck will meet you in Chile." The fact is that, when we go to a region for the first time, we do not know what to expect and have no personal experience on which to base a comparative judgement of whether or not it has been a 'good season'. We have to take things as we find them; how much better it might have been in a 'good season' cannot have much relevance to the work in hand - we have to collect what we can. Certainly, collecting in South America was a little 'Turkish' at times, involving a time-consuming scrape to put together a reasonable amount of some species. We have found that, in general, however, it is always possible to come up with a reasonable range of species, even in a poor year. You will never know what you might be missing. One problem we often have, because of the fact that we issue a list in this format, is that we cannot collect a sufficient quantity of seed of a particular species in an economic space of time. This was the case with quite a lot of groups, such as the *Nassauviias*, in 1991. In such instances, we usually return our seed to nature by sowing the contents of the collecting envelope in a suitable site. In spite of this, we usually return with quite a few unlistable oddments – we do our best to find good homes for them. To be honest, we did not find collecting either particularly poor or much more disappointing than usual but we are accustomed to dry areas - the Great Basin, North Africa and the Middle East are good areas in which to harden yourself against such tribulations. Our companion for the first three weeks of the trip, John Andrews, was well pleased with his collections of rosulate violas, which were top of his list for collection, but John, like ourselves, is more used to dry years than wet ones. In complete contrast, we have never known such a late season for seed in Britain. We decided that we might as well wait until we had some fresh cultivated seed to include with this list. We did not realise we should be waiting quite so long. Recent weeks here have been cool and cloudy and wet and seed has hung on and on and on. When we were growing a lot of hellebores and cyclamen in Dorset, we used to say that we had to keep an eye on them as soon as Chelsea Show was over. A few hot days and the hellebores would drop their seeds. As I write this towards the end of July, it is almost two months since Chelsea Week. The hellebores are ready but we still have firm capsules on several cyclamen species outside. For the first time we are sending out a list without having everything 'in the bag' - we could wait no longer as we plan to make a short collecting-trip in September. By the time that this reaches you we hope the few items we are missing will be collected, cleaned and packeted but quantities of these few items remain unpredictable until then. It is an excellent concept to send out a list in summer to distribute this type of material but the logistics are daunting. We did so last season, though we were about a month later than we had hoped to be in doing so, and we plan to do so next season, with an even tighter time-schedule for distributing the seed to you between 1992 collecting trips. We can try to make the business of
distribution as efficient as we can but we cannot make the weather perform to our requirements. There are few activities more frustrating and more humbling to arrogant human beings than the uncertainties of dealing with plants.

**POST MORTEM** We always enjoy reading comments from customers in response to the spontaneous prattle with which we preface our lists. We regard this as a piece of throw-away journalism, written to amuse or be mildly provocative and of no great consequence. Never before have we received so many supportive letters as we did last year, when we commented on the cost of the 1991 ‘6th International Rock Garden Plant Conference’. Obviously, a great many alpine-plant enthusiasts, apart from ourselves, were seriously upset over this. Charges of “financial elitism” and much else were made. In due course, I (rather than we) was savaged in a letter from the organisers. There was mention of public apologies, indeed, being made before my lecture for making “uninformed accusations without having the courtesy to check my facts”. Subsequently it was admitted that I had not, in fact, made any accusations but when I attempted to “inform” myself and “check facts” I was told that they could "see no useful purpose in supplying.... detailed figures." Apparently one way of finding out the figures involved in this year’s conference is to be a member of the committee organising the 2001 conference. Even a hardened cynic like myself could not fail to be mildly appalled at an attitude which seemed to preclude my rights to simply ask some questions (which, of course, remain unanswered). Perhaps mistakenly, I sensed a certain outrage that I had betrayed the privilege of being asked to speak by questioning the costs of the event. It seemed to escape the writer of the letter that it was my audience I was concerned about. I - and I am sure every other speaker - would have been delighted to see the several hundred vacant seats available at all lectures fully filled.

While many fewer delegates attended this event than even the organisers had conservatively estimated, this is very far from saying the event was a failure. It most certainly was not. I wrote last year that “we have no doubt whatsoever that for those who attend it will be a memorable event.” It most certainly was. Possibly the finest gathering of accomplished speakers ever assembled at such an event were put together into a well-balanced programme. It was a daunting place at which to speak; the standard was frighteningly high; after each lecture one felt “follow that then!” Of course, there were the seemingly inevitable problems. It would not seem to me impossible to have projection difficulties smoothed out before such events commence. Fortunately, this year, Henry Taylor, a ‘belt and braces’ man if ever there was one, like the good Scotsman he is, did not trust the Sassenachs one inch and transported a projector and screen from Scotland. As he had not thought to bring a vacuum cleaner to remove the dust from the university’s back-projection screen, this S.R.G.C. equipment was appropriately mated with a hastily produced projector and screen from the Birmingham A.G.S. group to provide adequate, if not outstanding, projection. While it is unfair to single out individual contributions to an occasion like this, Henry does merit special appreciation - not only for his resourcefulness, not only for all the letters he wrote to organise the speakers but also for the fact that he spent almost the entire conference slaving over a hot projector.

Writing to commiserate that there was no way his wife could afford to attend either, one fellow-speaker commented that he thought this conference might be “the last of its kind”. It may well be and it partly prompted my heading ‘Post Mortem’. If it is, in one way it will be sad. The association of the conference with a show makes it especially significant to overseas delegates. The show in 1991, which, of course, was open to anyone, was splendidly supported, superbly organised and altogether outstanding. A few visitors to this even found they could crack the system and take-in a lecture for £5. "Seemed a bit steep to me", commented my neighbour at one talk. It was not really - you could have had all the lectures for £115! One friend, a fully paid-up delegate still felt "It was worth every penny." It was - but I would still like to know where all the pennies went.

**NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD**

**JANUARY, 1992**

**FIRST STEPPES IN SEED SOWING**

We must acknowledge our indebtedness to Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver, Colorado, for the pun. He used to give a lecture, entitled “steppe by steppe”. We felt that in our case, however, it was appropriate in three ways. Although we do have a garden, we do not actually have much time for gardening. We know some of you imagine that we are in a position to grow plants from all the exciting seeds we list and that our lives must be something like those of children in a toy-shop. Sadly this is not the case. Any plants we grow have to look after themselves. An itinerant life-style is not compatible with growing thousands of temperamental and choice plants from seed. Up till now we have only been able to grow plants suited to neglect in our wet Welsh climate. *Hydrangeas, Camellias and Hostas* thrive and will in time eliminate the weeds. Choice and more diminutive species must wait until we can adapt the natural environment and arrange circumstances where they too will largely look after themselves. The first of
these adaptations has given us much pleasure over the past year and has also allowed us to sow some of our own seeds. Our home lies on a north-facing hillside. Behind it an old dry-stone wall supports the slope. By roofing over this area with 4m sheets of double-walled acrylic, we have created what is in effect a version of the sunken, Victorian pit-house all along the south-facing side of our house. Last winter, even though we were not at home during the coldest weather, the temperature did not go below freezing, without any additional heating. Due to the slope above no sun reaches it for about six weeks in mid-winter and the temperature does not vary violently on either side of a mean of 5° C/40° F even in cold weather. In the November to January period last season we arranged a little over half of the greenhouse -the "dry end", where it is planned that no watering will be needed during our absences abroad. As the existing dry-stone wall was a little high for access, we rebuilt it and terraced the planting-area into two stepped beds. What better to plant in the lower stepped bed than some steppe-plants? After we had disposed of a few lingering rhizomes of Oncocyclus and Regelia irises and some odd bulbs, the bed was surfaced with gravel and watered heavily with a hose to settle it. A selection of seeds was sown directly on to the gravel in intergrading irregular groups. Our intention was to hose these in during early January so that, when we returned from South America in mid-March most would have germinated. However, seed started germinating rapidly and, by the time we left in mid-January, most were up and away. Even reputed high-temperature germinators, such as Campanula, came up, although a few, such as Calyptridium did wait until our return. Only a couple of species have not appeared in spite of the fact that a lot of seed was rather ancient and some had been resting in our refrigerator since 1984. One was Tchihatchewia isatidea, which we particularly wanted to establish; we have some seed left and we shall try again. There were also lots of surprises. A batch of Calochortus kennedyi which we had never listed as we thought it had been collected in an immature state, was broadcast through the bed and germinated like a lawn. In time, we know that the larger background shrubs and the Mutisias and Tropaeolums on the beams will shade-out the steppe-bed but we can have quite a few years of fun from it before then. This winter we shall complete the "wet end" of the greenhouse, which will be kept moist with mist nozzles. Our Lapagerias and Ericaceae are ready. We'll tell you about it later.

**KILLERS OF THE STEPPES**

One of the most interesting results of our intentional negation of the steppe-bed we have just described was the way in which unthinned seedlings thinned themselves out in a very precise manner. We have not as yet removed a single seedling yet several species now look as if we had planted them at precise spacing. We have not as yet removed a single seedling yet several species now look as if we had planted them at precise spacing. **Eriogonum ovalifolium** and **Penstemon laricifolius** have been outstandingly effective in this respect. Within the same genera, *E. kennedyi* and *P. heterophyllus* on the other hand seem quite compatible en masse and have simply grown together. The bulbs do not seem to bear their fellows any resentment nor do lots of other genera, like *Aquilegia* and *Myosotis*, which have simply formed clumps of seedlings which look like one large plant. Anyone who knows desert plants growing naturally will have been struck by the large spaces between each individual plant and also by the fact that the same species is often to be found only at extremely wide intervals. One can only assume that some plants produce a chemical which is toxic to their own species -a rather odd philosophical point but a stratagem which might be useful in an arid environment. We cannot believe it is simply a question of the survival of the individual most efficient in competing for water or nutrients. It might also be an explanation for the loss of seedlings crowded in a pot; a loss invariably attributed to "damping off". The most efficient killer, however, was not a steppe-plant but a red-flowered Ipomoea -several dozen seedlings germinated - one by one they died until only one plant survived.

**NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD**

**SEPTEMBER, 1992**

**WHO ARE THE CONSERVATIONISTS?**

In the June, 1992, Alpine Garden Society Bulletin, Dr Sylvia Martinelli concludes the account of *Fritillaria* in North America, to which we draw your attention later in the list, with some remarks on "conservation": "Many horticulturists propagate *Fritillarias* from wild-collected seed and several species are fairly stable in cultivation, so that they could be returned to the wild at a future date." This has been qualified by an editorial footnote, which we assume reflects the policy of the Alpine Garden Society: "There is little evidence that such species can be successfully re-introduced to the wild. Indeed it is often very difficult for populations of some species to rebuild their numbers once they have been depleted by one cause or another. The best and surest way to ensure their survival is to leave them alone and never to dig up plants in the wild - even seed-collecting can have a markedly deleterious effect over a number of years."

We are all so brain-washed through being subjected to an endless stream of such didactic statements that few who read this would think to question its truth or to demand the evidence, if any, on which it is founded.
Moreover, it is made in qualification of an account by someone who has considerable experience of these plants in the wild, by someone who has none at all and, in addition, is apparently gifted with clairvoyance. In brief, it is a statement typical of many "conservationists", which epithet we shall retain in inverted commas for reasons which are (or, we hope, will be) obvious. Dr Martinelli appears to us to be reasonably literate and clearly wrote "could be returned"; she did not write "can" or "will be". In view of her earlier accounts of habitat destruction: "...bulldozing a hillside covered in F. purdyi to build houses, covering over F. recurva to make a car park .... ", we should think it unlikely that there will be any 'spare' habitat available for such plants in the near future - but who can know? In our list of Fritillaria you will find seed from two populations, whose habitats no longer exist. One, from which we have refrigerated seed collected in 1989, is now under concrete. The other is under water. Both are now doubtless experiencing some problems in trying "to rebuild their numbers." Fortunately, in the latter case, a few bulbs were "dug up" by Stan Farwig and Vic Girard. All the rest have vanished under the water (or, more usually, mud) of the Indian Valley Reservoir, one time type-locality for Brodiaea coronaria var. rosea (indeed a "rare and endangered" plant, if it is one) along with thousands of Calochortus luteus and Lewisia rediviva. The Californian serpentine habitats are so impoverished and useless for agriculture that they are "asking" to be used for garbage-dumping and land-fill. The same applies to the 'barrens' of Utah, amazing repositories of specialised plants. Species in this list collected on such sites include Erythronium multiscapoidum at Magalia, Arctomecon humilis near St. George and Calochortus nuttallii at Tridell.

The fate of such habitats, however, is nothing to what is destined to befall the oil-shale barrens of the Uintah Basin. Do "conservationists" imagine federally listing a species as "rare and endangered" will matter a jot when it is growing on a heap of oil-shale owned by a multinational oil company? As a Mormon rancher, running his cattle on the shale barrens, said to us "They tell me that the oil companies will put it back better than it was before." Sure they will! Sure they will!

Such habitat destruction is, of course, rapidly increasing throughout the world - an inevitable consequence of expanding human population. In a recent letter from friends who have travelled widely through Europe and Turkey for decades, they write that there are now "vast areas of tree-planting right where Crocus baytopiorum and Fritillaria carica subsp. serpenticola grow. When facing such devastation, we get very cross with the very aggressive anti-collecting propaganda of the Alpine Garden Society." All of us who have travelled in search of plants over a long period of time could recount a catalogue of such "devastation" but find little evidence of the success of the "conservationists".

Even in Britain, the designation of a habitat as a "site of special scientific interest" appears to afford singularly little protection. The same is true in North America. As an American friend remarked "These nuts go mad if you dig up a couple of bulbs but do nothing when some guy runs a bull-dozer blade right through the whole damn lot." From the start the "conservation" movement had been characterised by short-sighted, narrow-minded cant. Fortunately, there are now a few voices being raised to put forward more original ideas with more realistic foundations.

In an assessment of the status of the rhinoceros in the wild, Martin Booth writes "Conservation has been an abysmal failure. Depleted rhino numbers prove the point. Despite the charities' vast donations and publicity drives, wildlife is still dwindling; wild places are still vanishing under flames and ploughs." After outlining his "long-term ideal", he continues, "At present, because of the ill-conceived concepts and blinkered thinking of conservation charities; this is likely to remain an unattainable dream." A few weeks ago, Sara Parkin, one time luminary of the British Green Party, left with the statement, "I have been forced to the conclusion that the Green Party is a liability to green politics." In the world of horticulture, a few of us have known for years that "the ill-conceived concepts and blinkered thinking" of many "conservationists" were a liability to conservation. It is always a serious mistake to dismiss such people as "nuts" and an even more serious one to obsequiously cringe before them as the Alpine Garden Society has done. This very small number of bigots and extremists poses a real threat to the conservation of plants in cultivation and to the future development of horticulture. Because they make a lot of noise, they have been thrown some cosmetic legislation by politicians - legislation which does nothing to protect the habitats of the species in question.

Unfortunately, this legislation could be made to appear fully justified because the horticultural industry in Holland had taken no measures to put its own house in order and the international horticultural societies and organisations made no attempt to project a positive image of themselves. Once established, however, this legislation can be used as a completely open-ended means to create an ever-expanding and complex bureaucratic structure to limit the cultivation of plants and introduction of new material to horticulture. A botanist friend recently wrote, "Did you know Ilex aquifolium has been proposed (for listing by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) – Christmas will never be the same again."
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

We can but hope this is a manifestation of the insanity of a faction in its death throes. Even if it is, we may all still have to pass through the period of madness. The curator of a European botanic garden told us last year that he was "almost beaten up" by the representative of an American botanic garden at an international conference, simply because he had illustrated his lecture with a photograph of a species, which his fellow-delegate considered to be "rare and endangered", in cultivation in Europe. A few weeks ago, we received a letter from Nancy Wilson in California, one of the very few people in the U.S.A. involved with growing pure Narcissus species, saying that the American Daffodil Society was considering "banning" the cultivation of Narcissus species. You cannot believe this insanity?

Do not listen to us - read the account by Dr Harold Koopowitz in the 1990 issue of 'Herbertia' on "Conservation and Bulbous Plants". Dr Koopowitz is co-author of "Plant Extinction: A Global Crisis," published in 1990 and dutifully reviewed for the Alpine Garden Society by its then president, Mr F.F.H. Charlton, who writes, "This book is certainly propagandist - but in the best sense. You should read, and ponder the author's suggestions ...." We sincerely hope that the Alpine Garden Society and all the other horticultural societies, who have so far tended to maintain a more discreet silence on such matters, will "read, and ponder" Dr Koopowitz' 'Herbertia' article. He writes, “One should also be aware that there is a sentiment among the growing conservation movement that wild species should not be cultivated or kept in private hands.”

Dr Koopowitz concludes his article, "When the international ban on trade in wild species of the slipper orchid, Paphiopedilum came into effect several countries also banned artificially propagated species. Consequently in Australia trade in P. delenatii, which has not been collected in the wild for over 50 years, was also banned despite the fact that there are thousands of artificially propagated plants in cultivation, all of which were derived from a single specimen collected decades ago. We must be careful that this situation does not happen to bulbous plants, as well. Many bulbous plants are endangered but often they prove easy to cultivate and propagate. Examples of such species are Gladiolus aureus, G. watermeyeri, G. citrinus, Moraea loubeseri, M. atropunctata and Ixia maculata, which have been saved from the brink of extinction by being brought into cultivation."

The only possible future for many plant-species may be in cultivation. Writing in 1967, Dr Desmond Morris in his “Zoologist's study of the Human Animal, The Naked Ape”, wrote, "In 260 years' time, if the rate of increase stays steady - which is unlikely - there will be a seething mass of 400, 000 million naked apes crowding the face of the earth..... The consequence of this for all forms of wild life is obvious... We need not dwell on this nightmare ... Long before our populations reach the levels envisaged above we shall have broken so many of the rules that govern our biological nature that we shall have collapsed as a dominant species." As human beings, we have to retain some optimism regarding the survival of our own species and entertain some remote hope that horticulture will continue to survive and develop as a feature of our civilization. If it does not then vast numbers of plant-species are most certainly going to vanish forever. Gardeners are a unique group of people. No other section of the population has hundreds of years' experience in the conservation and propagation of an enormous diversity of plant-life. In no other field of conservation has there been more success. The list of species established in cultivation but either extinct or with extremely small wild-populations is incredibly long. Without thinking hard, we can mention such species as Metasequoia glyptostroboides, Ginkgo biloba, Franklinia alatamaha, Berberidopsis corallina. Eucryphia glutinosa, Tecomphila cyanocrocutus, Iris winogradowii, Paeonia mlokosewitschii, Cyclamen libanoticum - at about five to a line, we have no doubt we could fill this page - and the next in time. We should all be standing up and shouting "Look at us! Look at what we are doing! Aren't we clever!" Instead of demanding respect for our achievements, our horticultural societies expect us to respect "experts" so ignorant - or so dishonest - that they would have us believe all Cyclamen are "endangered" in the wild. This is simply insulting to our intelligence. Tens of thousands of plant species - and possibly the human species - are likely to vanish long before the last Cyclamen goes. A clear statement on where we stand is long overdue from all horticultural societies. In the interests of the future of horticulture and of conservation, it had better be the right one. The American Rock Garden Society has had the good sense to do this in summer, 1992. While this statement is in places a little verbose, it is overall eminently good sense:

1. We support habitat protection.
2. We oppose wholesale collecting of wild plants for immediate resale
3. “We support the practice of knowledgeable individuals collecting seeds, cuttings, or divisions of wild plants for the purposes of growing, studying, selecting, hybridizing and ultimately propagating and distributing to other growers”.

A much more positive projection of horticultural achievement must follow from us all. We shall do our part - turn to our last page of cultivated seed - "Look what we are doing! Aren't we clever!"
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

In the interests of balance, we must look at the recent achievements of the "conservationists". According to ‘TRAFFIC’, which apparently has a division occupied in ferreting around horticultural establishments sniffing out "rare and endangered" plants being threatened by gardeners, three "successful" prosecutions have been brought by British Customs & Excise on the advice of "experts" at Kew. One of these was taken against Dr Adriana Hoffmann, an internationally respected botanist and leading figure in the Fundacion Claudio Gay, the Chilean conservation organisation. She was found with two cactus plants in her handbag, without the necessary documentation, fined £200 and deported. Let us conclude with the words of this "convicted plant smuggler" writing on the conservation of Chilean petaloid monocotyledons "It is a great challenge for the future to complete the missing data by collecting properly and systematically for herbaria, to learn more about the relationships between taxa, their biology, ecology and conservation problems and, also, how to grow them properly." Are you with Dr Hoffmann ..... or with the eco-thugs?

CALOCHORTUS  In 1989, we listed an extensive range of this genus, comprising 35 collections and about one-third of the species in the genus. In this list you will find well over half of the entire genus and almost double the number of collections - a result which was not actually anticipated in our initial plans for 1992. We had intended concentrating on seedcollections of Erythronium and the Calochortus of Section Calochortus which flower very early. The 1992 season was not only extremely dry in the north, disastrous for many colonies of Erythronium with regard to flowering, but also at least a full month earlier than normal throughout California. While we missed out on the earliest species, it was possible to make collections which, in a later season, might not have been ready until August. Quantities of seed in many cases, however, are small. This particularly applies to some of the most southern species, which we have not listed before, from down towards the Mexican border. There will not be enough of these to go around so please suggest a few substitutes if you are ordering these. We may not be able to collect these again for some time. The genus, centred on California and with about seventy species, extends east from Washington to the Dakotas in the north and southwards to Guatemala. While we have extended our collections both north and south in 1992, we are still missing the most northern and southern species - it is not physically possible to do much more in a single season. Our collections would not have been possible without invaluable assistance from American friends. We have been able to build on the help given to us in 1989 by John Andrews and Wayne Roderick, through the kindness of Stan Farwig and Vic Girard in sharing their unrivalled knowledge and experience, built up through decades of growing and searching for this genus, especially in California. It would have been impossible for us to collect seed of some of the Oregon species without the assistance given to us by Frank Callahan, another tireless enthusiast engaged in a serious and long-running investigation of this genus. We are also very grateful to British enthusiast David King, not only for telling us of his knowledge of the plants in the wild but for growing and promoting the cultivation of this genus. Since our 1989 list, seed-grown bulbs of several species have been offered commercially - we hope many more will follow.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD  NOVEMBER, 1993

NO NAUGHTY TRICKIES
We used to know a gardener who habitually referred to Euphorbias as "euphorias". Our friend Alan King, delights in the story of an acquaintance who always referred to Euphorbia characias as E. "caractacus". It is tempting to think what such perpetrators of the botanical malapropism might make of the Andean genus Nototriches. The opportunity to make at least one seed-collection from this genus, possibly the most desirable Andeans for the alpine-specialist (as well as possibly the least growable) almost seemed sufficient justification for a visit to Ecuador. We had entertained thoughts of collecting there for some time but we felt it might be imprudent to try to base an entire list on Ecuadorean collections - largely unknown quantities for adventurous experimentation. We met the alpine flora of the northern Andes in Colombia more than a decade ago and knew that, while it is extremely interesting, there is not a great volume of material to excite the enthusiast - the real riches are in the highest reaches of the cloud-forests. Apart from Nototriches and Gentianella, the alpines incline more to the curious than the beautiful. Having compromised by linking another North American journey with a one month visit to Ecuador, we were on our way to our first Nototriches within a few days of our arrival. The weather was good for the first time and the dense cloud opened to reveal the great snow-dome of Cayambe in dazzling, pristine whiteness. Just how pristine it was became apparent as we slewed up through gelatinous slush. Substantial fresh snow-falls had covered the higher reaches of the mountain – and the Nototriches. Foul weather at the highest altitudes predominated during our visit. We have never had so many problems with wet herbarium specimens and wet clothes. "The rains have usually finished at least a month ago" said the locals and in an
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average season (if Ecuadorian weather is ever “average”) July might have been a good month to choose. For an excellent background account on some Ecuadorian alpines, read the two articles in the June & September, 1991, AGS Bulletins by Robert Rolfe, one of the finest botanical writers of our time. Robert had tolerable weather - at worst "a peculiarly pleasant combination of sleet and chilling mist." The sun does shine but we saw little of it. We both contracted a virulent Ecuadorian influenza shortly after Cayambe and this stayed with us for some time. Spending a couple of hours with a streaming cold, crawling on hands and knees in a driving blizzard, at over 4600m on Chimborazo – painstakingly drying out the sodden wadge of seed-capsules - then finding a total of fifteen seeds of *Nototriche jamesonii* - is not an experience to encourage recruitment to our profession. On viewing our pressed specimens of *N. jamesonii* (in a hopeless attempt to understand our behaviour), our Quito driver inquired "This is good ..........?"

GUARDIAN ANGEL

For the first time on our travels, we did not actually drive ourselves around. The facts that renting any vehicle in Ecuador is extremely expensive and that all hire cars carry an insurance excess of at least US $2,500 (blithely signing agreements on a credit-card can be expensive) reflect on the quality of Ecuadorian drivers and roads. For about the same cost as car-hire in the USA, we acquired the services of Angel Godoy and his elderly but capacious Peugeot. A day spent running around in Quito taxis enabled us to review possibilities and two one-day, progressively demanding, probationary trips with Angel clinched his employment. Hitherto, we should not have recommended airport taxi-drivers as a group likely to produce an honest, helpful and reliable driver but Angel proved both faultless and a good friend. Having established a rate which was acceptable to us but rather more than he would have earned in a day at the airport, Angel correctly decided that our interests were his own: no road was too bad for him to attempt; he negotiated the most favourable rates for hotel accommodation; he oiled the wheels of officialdom where necessary (about 50 cents seemed the going-rate for a nod and a wink from a police road-block, to avoid a long detour at Cuenca).

He was not only concerned about our physical well-being but also our moral environment. When we had to turn-out of our Quito hotel for a couple of nights, we suggested that we move to 'The Embassy Hotel' recommended to us by Robert Rolfe. Angel was uncomfortable. “Yes, it costs about the same ...... but it's a very bad area..... there are a lot of women around there” and, leaning over in hushed tone “.... prostitutes.”

LAS NATASHAS ALPINISTAS

Does Robert have an unfortunate affinity for such establishments? He tells us that during his ill-fated, 1993 visit to N.E. Turkey he arrived in Borcka near the Georgian border. In response to his inquiries, the locals informed him that there was indeed a hotel in the town but that it was full of Russian women. "Really?" replied Robert, "Are they climbers?" We suppose so - in a manner of speaking.

CONGRATULATIONS A.G.S. - you now have a policy about collecting from wild plants. As might have been expected, the policy is almost concealed by a plethora of mealy-mouthed statements, elitist qualifications and unsubstantiated non sequiturs – nevertheless, it is there and, intrinsically, there is little any sensible person could disagree with. Is it necessary, however, for the Alpine Garden Society to set itself up as an arbiter of morality? “Irresponsible collecting is morally objectionable” it says in bold type. If they had defined “irresponsible” we could discuss the matter. Some might consider it to be "morally objectionable" to use A.G.S. members’ money to provide free platforms for those involved in "conservation" for financial gain - employees of large organisations and wealthier charities. "Note: 8 extra pages added to accommodate CITES lists (Ed.)" - advertising space is available at a price for everyone else. The misapplication of CITES legislation to many plants is "morally objectionable". In Britain, we have recently acquired a bizarre piece of legislation relating to "dangerous dogs". It has been described as surreal. Beside CITES legislation, it appears reasonable common-sense. This legislation, which never could be satisfactorily applied to plants, covers many species long-cultivated or in no way endangered - included because they resemble a species which the whmis (which can change overnight) of a few people - maybe only one person - decide is "endangered" - this is not only dictatorial, it is dishonest. All *Sternbergia* are included because of one species - could many people distinguish any *Sternbergia* bulb from a paperwhite narcissus - or even a shallot? Must we anticipate having to obtain licences to grow and sell every plant? Can we look forward to spot strip-searches of package-tourists returning from Greece to locate the odd *Cyclamen graecum* capsule concealed in a body-orifice – "I swear it's only C. hederifolium!" – "The accused is remanded in custody until the seed has been grown to flowering.” This is all a deflection from facing reality - the last refuge of the smallest-minded "conservationist" - the reductio ad absurdum of “environmentalism" - truly "fiddling while Rome burns”. With much of the world trashed and the remainder groaning under the twin pressures of pollution and over-population - the only really relevant issues - here we have the pettiest of bureaucratic empire-building burying us under pieces of (recycled?) paper.
THE DARK AGES
The most "morally objectionable" statement, contained in the September, A.G.S. Bulletin, was, to us, Dr John Richards' throwaway parenthesis "[(local politics permitting)!]. To dismiss the Yugoslavian civil war, the most obscene European conflict of the latter half of our century, flippantly as "local politics" is disturbing but to juxtapose it with some scheme to dabble in Degenias in the Velebit is truly "morally objectionable" - but then we have long been known as eccentrics in the plant-world. Dr Richards' article was well written and thoughtful but, as we read it, a terse remark from a correspondent replying to our 1992 comments, came to mind - "as a scientist I feel we are entering the Dark Ages." Dr Richards is writing "as a scientist" but this is not the language of science - "may", "may", "may", "it is likely", "we must assume", "in all probability", "almost sure". He does not actually know much about all this, does he? He "may" be correct but then again he "may" not - whether he is or not "may" not matter much at all because he "may" be hit by a 'bus tomorrow. The article is by no means devoid of "facts", though these sometimes contradict what he has written elsewhere. Then there is the interesting "the bottom of the cliff' syndrome" - we look forward to seeing a paper on this. Which cliff would that be? Personally, as collectors of seed of saxatile plants, we are more used to the 'half-way up the cliff' syndrome. "Species are infinitely variable" - really? "Ininitely" is a big word for a "scientist" to use. "Seed should never be collected from short-lived plants" i.e. do not remove annual weeds, such as groundsel and poppers from your rock-garden, you "may" cause their extinction. "A foxglove, Digitalis purpurea, can produce 300,000 seeds in its single flowering season, but in each case, on average, only one seed will survive to reproduce itself." Now this illuminating "fact" presupposes that at some time in history there was a great 'zap' and suddenly, let us say, 5,678,901 representatives of the "species". Digitalis purpurea, appeared on the earth. Good gracious! But let us not forget "a species is a unique creation" - we are not just "entering the Dark Ages" we are already there.

DEER, DEER, DEER!
Don Elick writes from Japan, "What a coincidence that you should bring up Lilium speciosum clivorum in your latest list. I went to Agawa again in late November to try to get seed, though mainly to collect Tricyrtis. It is a long and uncomfortable traipe even from Osaka without a helicopter and when I got there (overnight from Osaka to Kochi on a cargo-ferry taking a load of overripe fish for a fertilizer works) I found the cursed serows had decimated virtually every liliaceous plant in the gorges. In case you aren't up on obscure East Asian ruminants, the serow is a graceless, perpetually browsing and belching deer-relation that has been taken up as the trendiest cause celebre of the Japanese Brigitte Bardots. They had desecrated the landscape all the way up the river with 'Save the Serow' placards and it gave me great pleasure to burn a bunch of the things to war.

So now you know how I stand on uninformed conservatism - give the A.G.S. Hell for me - and all the rest of 'em." Thanks Don - and all who wrote.

CONSERVATION QUOTES
We are not sure if we should feel gratified that the September, 1993 A.G.S. Bulletin included brief (and fair) quotations from our 1992 comments on "conservation", alongside the utterances of HRH the Prince of Wales, an Archbishop of Canterbury and the Dalai Lama (to say nothing of Jonathon Porritt and Richard Branson). We noted that one of the more notable 1992 'conservation quotes' was not included: the remark by George Bush, former President of the USA, about us all "being up to our necks in spotted owls and out of work", "if these two bozos are elected." Bush - or at least his writer - was not unaware of a grass-roots resentment in rural America against attempts to interfere in rural life by bureaucrats and those seen as urban intellectuals. Pinned up in the village-store in Teasdale, a neat, pretty little Mormon town, at present looking sadly depressed, was the local 'conservation quote': "If two kids can perceive in the cab of a pick-up in a crowded drive-in, how come it takes a pair of spotted owls 2,500 acres?" While the reasoning is faulty, the sentiments are real. In Ecuador, it is the young urban intellectual who regards the attempts at interference by the richer inhabitants of the world as a new imperialism (the rural population in such countries, like most of the world's population, is usually too concerned about its next meal to be troubled by such matters). The extraction of oil in the upper Amazonian Basin of Ecuador & Peru is causing vast and unpublicised destruction and pollution, while profits vanish abroad, or remain in the hands of very few. Our 'base-camp', a small hotel in Quito was invaded briefly by a gaggle of intense and starry-eyed female school-teachers from Colorado, Nikon camera-pouches to the front, bum-bags to the rear, passing through on their way to "the jungle" "to stay with the Indians".
- "We're with a group called 'Save the Rain Forest'". The night before their arrival a graffito appeared opposite our
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hotel (a little chilling to think that they were expected) : "No llora por la Amazonia - tu compras Texaco." - "Don't cry for Amazonia - you buy Texaco." We fear it might have been too gentle and too subtle for the intellects of those at whom it was aimed; perhaps none of them read Spanish; anyway, no-one seemed to notice - they were off to save the rain-forest.

SEEDS COLLECTED IN ECUADOR, JULY, 1993, BY JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD

THE CLIMATE cannot be summed up briefly. It is incredibly diverse and every mountainous area - if not every peak and valley - has its own micro-climate. Warm, wet air rises from the Amazon Basin in the East and the Pacific in the West to produce an overall wet montane climate though it can be very dry locally in interandine valleys lying in rain-shadows. Summer and winter are replaced by irregular dry and wet seasons. Temperatures fluctuate more between day and night in the dry season because of a lack of cloud but it can be much colder overall during a wet season because there is no daily sunshine. For most montane plants in Ecuador, the wet season is winter and flowering peaks at the beginning of the dry season in many cases. This seems alien to gardeners used to "conventional climates" but the overall situation at higher altitudes (and it is only these which concern us here) is not so very different to cool, temperate climates, such as in the British Isles, parts of New Zealand and S.E. Australia and N.W. America, where winters are not really very cold nor summers very hot. All the plants from which we have collected seed will be very much happier outside in such climates, during the summer. The treatment of equatorial Andean species in winter will depend on the altitude at which they grow and, rather than quote statistics, we feel it may mean more to gardeners if we look at three broad altitudinal categories and the foreign plants which are at home in them. It is only by adventurous and experimental interpretation of these that we can proceed.

2500 to 3500m Quito, at 2850m, has a climate which has been described as "eternal spring", though in the wet-season it can be quite a chilly spring - rather like a Mediterranean winter. In the gardens, Cyclamen persicum grows and flowers non-stop, Argyranthemum cvs. thrive and Watsonias are naturalized. Between 2500 and 3000m plants will be unlikely to experience serious frosts and they should be grown frost-free in winter. Most of the population - Ecuador is the most densely populated country in S. America - live in the intermontane basins around this altitude and the natural vegetation (montane scrub) is almost entirely removed. Approaching 3500m it is noticeably cooler.

3200 to 3700m This narrow band, which varies somewhat- according to the locality, was, to us, the most interesting zone. About here montane scrub grades into grass paramo, sometimes abruptly, sometimes through dwarf "elfin forest". We should guess plants from here would be most successful in cool, moist climates, such as in W. coast Britain, provided frosts were not severe - Cornish and Irish material. Here, in some areas Digitalis purpurea is naturalized. These are plants for experimentation; some might be hardier than we imagine. Cool summers will suit them.

3500 to 5000m At the lower levels, there is paramo, the high altitude moorland so characteristic of the N. Andes. The dominant plants are grasses and the other species occupy specialised niches, such as wet sites or stony sites. Little in the way of new species occurs above 4300m. Nototriche starts at about 4000 m. Only the odd Draba extends to over 5000m; there would be too little time uncovered by snow for most plants above 4500m. The snow-capped summit of Chimborazo is 6310m, Cotopaxi is 5897m, and Cayambe is 5790m. The problem in growing the alpines is much more likely to be warm summers than cold winters. We should advise growing such plants outside throughout the year in the UK; many should thrive on British winters, autumns and springs. This is not the Peruvian or Bolivian altiplano: Ecuadorian alpines survive rain, hail, sleet and snow-cover and skies which are often overcast with cloud. Long, hot summer days are another matter but the alpine-specialist has always been optimistic and inventive. Take heart and bear in mind what we have written here is an appalling generalisation - homely northern conifers have been planted in the paramo, which comes down to 3200 - 3300m west of Cotopaxi. It looks just like the Scottish Highlands.

NOMENCLATURE follows the excellent 'Flora of Ecuador', where it exists. Where families have not yet been covered, we have serious problems. Work is in process on several important families from our viewpoint and we hope to be able to provide names which will be used in the flora in due course. We had hoped to have determinations on our dried herbarium material in time to include them in this list but botanical wheels grind slowly. In 1994, our list will concentrate on S. American species and we hope to have more names by then. We much prefer to list material identified only to generic level than to provide guesses likely to be incorrect - the wrong names tend to stick and cause confusion.

SEEDS COLLECTED IN NORTH AMERICA
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The majority of seeds listed ....were collected by ourselves during June, 1993, or during the May-July period, 1992. Also included is seed from other collectors, such as Stan Farwig and Vic Girard, with a particularly significant contribution, as on previous occasions, from John Andrews. All seed collected prior to 1993 has been stored in low humidity under refrigerated conditions and experience over several years has convinced us that little, if any, deterioration in viability will have occurred. In some cases, such storage even appears to enhance the capacity for germination.

NOMENCLATURE for Californian species has in general been put in line with the most recent account: 'The Jepson Manual -Higher Plants of California' published in 1993. The value of this wholly depends on the quality of the work of the author of each account - it is "good in parts" but in no way approaches the rather outdated, somewhat insular and often functionally imperfect 'A Californian Flora' of Munz & Keck (1959), which will continue to be our primary reference. The superlative standard set by the continuing 'Intermountain Flora' and 'A Utah Flora' (Welsh, 1987) means that they are almost invariably used for taxa occurring within their areas. We edit with the interests of gardeners in mind.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD  SEPTEMBER 1994

TURKISH DELIGHTS AGAIN
When we wrote of our plans last winter, we had no intention of leaving Wales during the spring and summer after our return from Argentina in March. However, we were presented with the possibility of accompanying the bulb-grower Norman Stevens, on a seed-collecting trip to S. Turkey. Norman had originally hoped that our mutual friend John Andrews, who had been with him on his previous trip, might be able to go with him. As John had just spent some weeks with us in Argentina, this was not possible. As we have felt for some time that we should try to collect some new Turkish species, we compromised by sending Jim as a substitute for John and leaving Jenny in Wales to do some gardening. We had not visited Turkey since 1988 and anticipated collecting several species, from which we had not obtained seeds in the past. As it turned out, we could barely have chosen a worse year. The season had been disastrous for the S. Anatolian steppe flora and not much better in the mountains and the S.W. Crocus seeds, which were the object of Norman's visit, had either not set or dehisced early. Of course, we found lots of interesting plants but their condition was abysmally poor and the amounts of any seed collected were miserably small - in most cases, far too few to offer. We shall be growing these ourselves and we hope you will have some advantage from our journey in the future. We can only be thankful that we had not planned to spend three months collecting there in 1994. On the other hand, we are told that the season was extremely good up in the N.E. It is a big country and a longer visit always gives much more fluidity and the opportunity to alter plans to spend more time in the best areas. What was disconcerting for both Norman and Jim was the fact that there had been so many changes in Turkey since their last visits. If we aggregate the time they have both spent looking for plants in Turkey, we doubt if the total could be rivalled by many other people. They frequently failed to find some of their favourite localities and, when they did, often found them greatly altered. Jim's favourite site for Fritillaria alfredae was completely overgrown by oak scrub and a hillside near Gaziantep, rich in a bluish form of Iris sari, had been planted with pistachios. He completely failed to find the type-locality where he and Jenny had collected Muscari macebethianum, after spending a morning looking for it. As this is the only known site and we are the only people who know where it is, this is somewhat embarrassing. There are many more new roads and many more surfaced roads. The old roads are abandoned and falling down the mountains. It is likely to be the last summer that it will be possible to drive over the splendid Irmasan pass north of Akseki. This year it was a rather hazardous undertaking. On the other hand, new roads open up new localities and there remain vast areas of Turkey which are very difficult to reach and are still unknown botanically. The people, of course, were as delightful and overwhelmingly hospitable as ever. The booming then fragile economy, accompanied by hyper-inflation, of recent years and the increasing military influence on their lives, have done little to suppress Turkish ebullience.

HOME SWEAT HOME
Our mention of botanical malapropisms - of "euphorias" and "naughty-trickies" - in the last list elicited some worthwhile correspondence. We particularly enjoyed the "appy mediums". Linguistic torture was much in evidence in the S.W. corner of Turkey, where a multiplicity of signs intended to attract the foreign tourists occasionally lightened a somewhat depressing journey. We did not investigate the 'CARPET FARM' but we did pay attention, when driving past the quarry on Baba Dag, after being told 'LOOK OUT! STONES CARRYING LORRIES.'
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Having been told of the many small pensions on the peninsula in Lake Egredir, we planned our day to arrive there in the evening. Cruising slowly past a variety of signs advertising their respective good qualities in German and English, we paused at "Ali's" - 'A SWEAT HOME FOR YOU'. "That one will do", said Norman. The charming young Turkish lady who ran the establishment spoke excellent and fluent English and had a brother who worked in a Turkish restaurant in Sheffield. "Tell me", she said, "Why did you choose our pension?" We did not have the heart to tell her and lied effusively. If we had done so, she might have lost some future business. Free-range tourists are thin on the ground in Turkey at present. The packaged variety is still numerous but confined to a very limited area in the S.W., discreetly ringed by members of the Turkish armed forces, rather more in evidence and more nervous here than in the Kurdish-speaking area around Diyarbakir far to the east. Needless to say, our strange activities came to their attention and, on our last day, after leaving our "sweat home" in Egredir, we were obliged to spend some time explaining what Norman was doing crawling about on a dried-up hillside (looking for Crocus capsules) while Jim was kneeling in a prayer-like position by the roadside with a sheet of paper (cleaning seed). We kept in mind how British security forces might have reacted to a similar sight in Ireland and the incident was dealt with in good humour and with courtesy on both sides. But reports had to be filled in and signed and it all took time. No sooner had we left the army-post, than a young Turkish driver decided to accelerate past our car on a stretch of newly gravelled road, skidded sideways at high speed, slammed into our car and forced us off the road - fortunately not over a precipice. This necessitated spending the rest of the day with the traffic police and with the army, who are always involved in such matters in Turkey, at the next army-post. Subsequent army check-points were approached with a feeling of unease and the inevitable banter and hilarity expressed at them over the cramped condition of our vehicle were not always appreciated. Back at our "sweat home" in Wales, Jenny had experienced some weeks of cool, wet weather. Two days after our return, bombs exploded in a selection of S.W. Turkish coastal resorts. Home, sweet home, indeed.

ALPINE FREEZE-OUT? (later in...) ... this list, you will find some comments on the involvement of the Royal Horticultural Society with the "derailment", of an EC Draft Regulation which, if implemented, would have made life for gardeners in Europe unbearable. You will find one name missing from among the other gardening societies which were involved in consultations - those which the R.H.S. "thought would be the main affected parties in horticulture." Did no-one ask the Alpine Garden Society if they wished to be involved? Were the A.G.S. asked and refuse to take part? We are not privy to such matters and can but remark on their notable absence and also the absence of any communication with their members about their official policy towards this Draft Regulation. So far we have seen the A.G.S., at their members' expense, devote a considerable amount of Bulletin space to what might be seen as pre-publicity for this anticipated legislation and they appear to align themselves with another group of non-garden registered Charities who have been extremely influential in formulating the substance of the Draft. Some of you may think we have been harsh on the A.G.S. in the past but how can one react to a society which appears to connive with those who would seek to turn the entire membership into criminals. Are those who run the A.G.S. simply incompetent? Do they not understand what is happening? Or is there some hidden agenda, which simple souls like ourselves cannot be expected to understand? We realise this is all about vested interests and very little to do with conservation. The vested interests of bureaucrats and vested interests of money-spinning Charities. Perhaps the A.G.S. thinks it might have an appropriate future role to play as the UK Registration Authority for those who wish to grow any alpine or bulbous plant.... If you wish to grow Androsace pyrenaica, apply to the A.G.S. - reduced price for licences to members of the Society. Only 10 licences per annum are available for those wishing to grow Jankaea heldreichii. It has been brought to our attention that a member in Wales is growing Galanthus nivalis without a licence. It is morally repugnant to cultivate members of the genus Galanthus without a licence. Yes, it is pure A.G.S. - an expanding bureaucracy, a nice little earner and all with heavy moral overtones and more than a hint of elitism. Not everyone is likely to agree with us – thank goodness. Graham Rice wrote to us when we first brought up this subject to the effect that he did not agree with what we said but that he would defend to the death our right to say it. We appreciated the sentiments though we were not sure if we should be prepared to reciprocate - with the death bit that is. Last winter Graham sent us a copy of an article he had written for 'The Observer', one of our British national newspapers. In it he praised the brave little A.G.S. and the Fauna and Flora Preservation Society and was blistering in his condemnation of the R.H.S. Graham is a professional journalist and obviously a crusader. While we respect his 'Something must be done' (and the R.H.S. is not doing it) and 'Ban it' viewpoint, we have always been more than a little wary of such attitudes. After all, they gave us the mess that is CITES. If we condemn the R.H.S.for anything it is for taking twenty years to waken up and try to deal with that mess.

PET OF THE MONTH
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We notice a recent appeal by Graham Rice to members of the Hardy Plant Society. Under 'Pet Plants', he writes, "There is a white flowered form of the lesser celandine, with blue backs to its petals, which I understand is named 'Randall's White' after Randall, a cat owned by Alan Robinson of Robinson's Nursery in Kent. Do any members know of other plants named after pets - cats, dogs, budgies, parrots ....?" This all seems a bit improbable to us but we'll take your word for it Graham, though we should have thought the questions for a good investigative journalist might have been if the Robinson's cat is named Randall, after whom was the cat named? Did Robinson's Nursery name the other celandine, 'Brazen Hussey'?" Staying with lesser celandines, we could point out more obviously that 'Salmon's White' was named after our pet fish. We should have thought it apparent that Delphinium 'Tiddles', Hemerocallis 'Corky' and Paeonia 'Felix Supreme' were all named after felines. Dianthus 'Squeeks' is called after A.G. Weeks' pet mouse; Hosta 'Squiggles' and H. 'Green Wiggles' after Paul Aden's pet worms; Hemerocallis 'Winnie the Pooh' after the raiser's teddy-bear. The anonymous "ginger tom next door" is remembered in Iris 'Wild Ginger' and Aster 'Golden Spray'. The story is that Astrantia 'Shaggy' was named after Margery Fish's dog. We all know about Kath Dryden's Lewisia 'Pinkie' and Primula allionii 'Perkie' but who would have thought that Helleborus 'Trotter's Spotted' was named after Beth Chatto's pet piglet. The naming of plants after famous people's pets is a subject in itself. The Primulas 'Tenby Grey' and 'Grey Monarch' are called after the budgies at No. 10 Downing Street and Penstemon 'True Blue' after the pussy preceding them. We think Penstemon 'Blue Bedder' was also named after another political pet. We seem to recollect a tabloid newspaper account of the naming of Primulas 'Fiery Red' and 'Red Hugh', as well as a whole series of Sempervivums, 'Red Ace', 'Red Chief', 'Red Giant' and so on, after Ken Livingstone's pet newts. The most honoured pet, however, is immortalised by Helleborus 'Parrot', Delphinium 'Polly', Hemerocallis 'Pretty Polly', Hosta 'Slim Polly' and, finally, Tulipa 'Flaming Parrot', all of which commemorate the famous ex-parrot purchased by John Cleese - now sadly deceased.

WE DO SPEAK TO THE A.G.S.
Sequestered in W. Wales, we seldom have the opportunity to meet many of our customers in person. We do, however, seem to have arranged a disconcerting number of talks, mainly to English Alpine Garden Society local groups, during 1994 and 1995. We hope that any of our customers who are members of these groups will take the opportunity to introduce themselves to one of us at these meetings. We should also point out that all groups welcome non-members, so we can still see you if we are in your area, whether or not you belong to the A.G.S.

THE BACK-YARD
If you live in the EC, your back-yard has been and may continue to be threatened. In 1992, subsequent to the publication of an EC Draft Regulation on Wild-life Trade, we wrote at some length regarding the attitudes of those professionally engaged in "conservation" to gardening and implored gardeners to project a more positive image of themselves. This EC Draft more or less attempted to absorb the Berne Convention and Habitats Directive into existing CITES legislation. Member states would have been obliged to implement it through national legislation. Under this legislation, the freedom of gardeners to grow any species they wish to would have been considerably restricted. "Possession and sale are prohibited" in the case of many species widely grown in gardens. Among species familiar to many of you, possession and sale would have been prohibited of several Aretian Androsaces, Arnica montana, Azorina vidalii, Cistula palhinhae, Colchicum corsicum, Daphne petraea, Eryngium alpinum, many Fritillaria species, Galanthus nivalis, Paeonia cambessedesii, Physoplex comosa, Soldanella villosa, Origanum dictamnus, Leucokum nicaense and almost all the European Narcissus species. Of course, "banning" the cultivation of such plants would have been impossible, so what was proposed was a highly complex and, doubtless, expensive system of registration and paper-work. We should almost certainly have been required to have a licence to sell you seeds of certain species and you would have to have a licence to grow them - this may still come about. The progress of the Draft Regulation has been temporarily "derailed" by a number of organizations, including from a horticultural viewpoint the Royal Horticultural Society, initially acting in conjunction with the British Cactus & Succulent Society, the British Iris Society, the British Orchid Growers' Association, the Cyclamen Society, the Daffodil Society, the Hardy Plant Society and the Horticultural Trades Association. Until our back-yard is bulldozed by bureaucrats, we continue to use it to emphasise the many plant species being preserved by a few thousand specialist-gardeners throughout the world. We believe that gardeners will earn the gratitude of better-informed future generations. Our knowledge and skills must survive and develop.

NARCISSUS CYCLAMINEUS
This is one of over a dozen Narcissus species which the EC Draft Regulation mentions. Restrictions could also have
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been understood to apply to garden hybrids involving this species. In other words, you might have needed a licence to buy a dozen "Tete a Tete" from your local garden-centre. Just how rare or how restricted this species is in nature is not known to us. We have never seen it growing wild nor, indeed, has our friend John Blanchard, who has probably visited almost every other known species in its natural habitat. It was in cultivation prior to 1608 as it is illustrated in a gardening book of that year. Subsequently, it appears to have been 'lost' for 300 years and many botanists doubted that it had ever existed. It was found again in Portugal in 1885 and has been in cultivation since then. If conditions are to its liking, it is well suited to the British climate and will sow itself enthusiastically, as it does in the alpine-meadow in the RHS garden at Wisley. A heavy, acid loam is considered to be ideal. Our conditions outside here should suit it well but we have up till now been intent on building up a substantial stock for seed production and have kept the bulbs in pans so that they can be brought in under cover for hand-pollination. This is the first year that we have a good quantity to list. We are sure most of you know it - unlike any other species in its extraordinarily long trumpet and its fully reflexed perianth-segments – an irresistable, brilliant yellow daffodil which everyone wants to grow and most people can. (We offer)... our own cultivated, band-pollinated seed.

TULIPA SPRENGERI
While this is included in the Berne Convention, it is not included in the Habitats Directive, which is just as well as it does not grow within the area of the EC and it may be rather difficult to protect the habitat of a species which is probably extinct. We may be wrong, perhaps someone has rediscovered it in the wild and is keeping its whereabouts a great secret. It hardly matters as it is well established in cultivation and, like N. cyclamineus, sows itself happily in many British gardens. Described exactly 100 years ago from cultivated material grown from bulbs sent to the firm of Damman & Co. near Naples by a German called Muhlendorff. Perhaps Herr Muhlendorff dug up every bulb there was near Amasya in N.E. Turkey and sent them all to Naples because no-one has collected it since then. This is a very distinct species, the latest of all tulips to flower and perhaps the best garden-plant in the genus in UK gardens.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD APRIL, 1995

PERHAPS BETTER LATE THAN NEVER
For some time we have been remarking facetiously that this seed-list will be issued at the best time for our customers in the southern hemisphere. About 20% of our seed goes there so we should accommodate them with at least 20% of our lists. It is certainly not a normal time for one of our lists to appear. It might not seem to be the most prudent course from the business viewpoint of maximising orders from it. We really have no alternative and we shall wait with interest to see the pattern of your response. We normally have a rush of orders during the first few weeks after sending out a list. We can handle this initially as we are now all packeted up and ready to go but, if orders continue to come in as usual, they will simply have to wait till September. We shall be in North America from late May through to August. Give us a week or so to sort everything out on our return and we shall send your order out in September. If you do not actually need the seeds until September - and this is not a bad idea if you are involved with most petaloid monocots - and other low-temperature germinators - send us your order now or at any time over the summer, tell us that you do not need it till September and date your cheque 1st September. All our correspondence is opened by a friend when we are abroad and your order will be acknowledged and filed for our return. If we cannot complete all orders in hand by mid-May, we shall write to tell you. There are, of course, a great many species listed which will germinate at the higher spring & summer temperatures - Compositae, Cruciferae and so on - and we shall get orders out in April-May if we can do so. We think most of our regular customers are probably persuaded by now that 'fresh' seed is not particularly important for dry-climate species; so don't worry about the collection dates - they are there for the record and so you can make an informed choice. We are all so full of the received wisdom about the benefits of 'fresh' seed that it takes time to learn that older seed can sometimes actually give better results. We believe the prerequisites of viable seed are: 1. That it is collected, matured & dried with knowledge and care. 2. That it is stored in conditions of low humidity and even temperature. While we do refrigerate seed, we are not actually convinced that storing it at an even room temperature is not just as good. We have been sowing quite a lot of seed ourselves lately - extracted from our refrigerator and up to 10 or 12 years old - and there have been some interesting results. We shall not bore you with excuses or explanations as to why this seed-list - Scheduled for December, 1994 - is quite so late. You can attribute it to our general incompetence and lack of accurate planning, resulting from a failure to recognize that distributing an increasing volume of seed annually takes an increasing amount of time and that
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attempts to establish stocks of living plants for the production of home-grown seed also takes an additional amount of time. We hope you will benefit in the end and continue to support our work.

**ECONOMIC MIRACLES** don't come cheaply. In Britain we are paying for one at present. When we were in Argentina last year, the flamboyant President Menem was touring other South American countries proclaiming his own 'economic miracle'. We found ourselves in the middle of it. We must have done too much travelling and become too blasé. Through our incompetence and lack of accurate planning on this occasion, we assumed everything would be much the same as in 1991. We had not done our homework. It was not. In 1991, rampant inflation and steady devaluation were manifest in long queues outside the banks, as Argentinians waited to change their pesos into US $. In a slick move, Menem devalued drastically and made the new peso equal to $1 - both currencies being equally acceptable. It works for a time. From our viewpoint (quite apart from that of most Argentinians) it made renting a vehicle, fuel and many other costs frighteningly expensive. We had planned to spend all of our time collecting in Argentina but there was no way we could have justified the cost. Fortunately, we were joined for a few weeks by John Andrews and Mike Broder from Berkeley. Splitting the cost of transport made the expense bearable. When John & Mike flew back to California, we flew over the Andes for ten days in the more economically acceptable environment of Chile, which we had not originally planned to visit at all. While you may have missed out on a few Argentinian species from the drier North, we have been able to collect seed from some of the classic plants from the central Chilean Andes. The quality and quantity of seed in the mountains south from Mendoza to Bariloche in Argentina was also excellent (it seemed to have been much poorer and drier to the North of Mendoza - maybe we did not miss too much), so while the journey may not have been rewarding from a business viewpoint, it has at least yielded some worthwhile seeds. We devote most of this list to these and other South American species - we shall not be listing them in our next list but we shall possibly keep the South American section here running over 1996 with amendments and updates. Make the most of them - we shall not be back in Argentina under the present circumstances unless we experience our own personal economic miracle.

**A POSITIVELY DISCRIMINATING POLICY**

If you are developing an interest in South American plants, you may be interested in a letter received from a researcher for a British television gardening programme. She inquired to find out if we could put her in touch with anyone growing a collection of Andean alpines. We 'phoned back to tell her that, while we had no immediate suggestions; we'd call again if anyone came to mind. She added that she had also been instructed to include more 'ethnic minorities' and children in the programmes. So, if you think you may have the physiognomy and skin-colouration, which appear to be the qualifications for membership of 'an ethnic minority', are less than 16 years old and grow a collection of Andean alpines, let us know. We can guarantee you your 15 minutes of fame. We thought we might try to persuade one of our local friends, who will be helping to collate and mail this list, to grow some plants but, though a fluent Welsh-speaker of Nigerian extraction, she is unfortunately 18 years old now.

... **AND A CORRECTLY POLITICAL PLANTPERSON**  We were told a delightful story about MS. Victoria Matthews recently. The occasion was an interview in Florida in connection with Brinsley Burbidge's appointment there. (We assume they had established why they felt obliged to grill Matthews in connection with Burbidge - obviously, you cannot be too careful about whom you employ to run a botanic garden in Miami.) One of her interviewers questioned Vicky on the title of the publication she then edited - 'The New Plantsman' indeed. "We've been through all that in Britain" Vicky is said to have replied, "and come out the other side." Whereupon the interviewing panel burst into spontaneous applause.

**THE SECRET TOOTHWORT AND OTHER HOLOPARASITES**

The spectacular holoparasite, *Lathraea clandestina*, seems to be popping up all over the place this spring. It was the subject of an exhaustive account by Victoria Matthews in the most recent issue of 'The New Plantsman'. Its specific name has been chosen to conceal the identity of the new anthologist of another excellent gardening publication (about which we shall say no more, as it must look as if we have a sick obsession with it - but what an exciting name to choose - 'Clandestina' - so evocative of the dark and forbidden - a name that might well prove to be the title of a lost novel by the Marquis de Sade). Then, a few weeks ago, we attended a lecture, which started with the speaker dangling a plastic bag containing severed pieces of *L. clandestina* before the audience. "Now then, I'm going to ask you to pass this along the rows so you can all have a look at it and we'll see if any of you know what it is." Anyone who knew the plant could see what it was from the back-row but who wants to be a spoilsport? "Now then, anybody know?" "Is it a broomrape?" "No. No. It's not a broomrape. It is in the broomrape family but it's not a broomrape." Our lecturer was apparently in disagreement with Prof Webb's 1972 contention that it is in Scrophulariaceae and that any similarity to Orobancheaceae "seems to be superficial." At this point, the
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more extrovert might have assumed an antiquely rural accent and said, "That be the secret toothwort thur mister. Thee don't wanna meddle wi' she." However, both of us being children unwilling to raise our hands in class, we kept silent. We might have remained so had not the speaker continued to jiggle his plastic bag at arm's length like an auctioneer inviting the final bid. "Nobody know then? Nobody know?" A nudge and a whisper, "For goodness sake, tell him", forced "It's called Lathraea clandestina" from one of us. There was only a brief pause. "There's the chap to ask if you want your plants identified. There you are then! Take it home and grow it in your garden!" The offer was declined. Although some seeds might have been acceptable, we could be thankful that it was not the fruiting season. At such a time that great gardener, Mr Bowles (the great gardener Mrs Fish always referred to him as Mr Bowles and, like the great Ernest Wilson, he should always be called great) played a jolly prank. "I greatly enjoyed taking some samples of ripe capsules up to one of the meetings of the Scientific Committee of the RHS ....I gave them a pinch, and startled the members at the other end of the table by the sudden impact of several Lathraea seeds .... I can always get some amusement by inducing a visitor to press a bunch of ripe capsules and noting how high he jumps when the seeds fly into his face .... " - Wizard wheeze, eh, old chap!

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

It might be thought that the Royal Horticultural Society had totally changed from the days of Mr Bowles. We are not so sure. Having pumped itself up to a membership approaching 200,000 with a multi-million pound turnover, it is not inappropriate that it should be run by money-men. Mr Robin Herbert, formerly on the board of the multinational Marks & Spencer, has been succeeded as president by Sir Simon Hornby, Chairman of the W.H. Smith Group. A gardening writer, who had best remain anonymous, recently wrote to us after a press-briefing, "There are no horticulturists in charge anymore and the new president was arrogant and dismissive .....There wasn't a plant mentioned - it was all money and projects. And money again." The proceeds of the National Lottery (a new "tax on the greed of the gullible poor" - like ourselves) constitute a new Eldorado for our British conquistadores. The R.H.S. seems to be in there with its ever-so-slightly-sleazy manoeuvre to remove the Lindley Library from London to Wisley, so that it can be presented as the centre-piece of a building-project, which should qualify as the capital expenditure of "a good cause", enabling it to apply for a cut of lottery money. The new R.H.S. maybe did not anticipate that what it may have thought of as the 'old establishment' would climb out of their ha-has and emerge from their gazebos with quite so much vehemence. At the A.G.M. in February, Sir Simon's attempt to brush it all under the carpet was greeted with shouts of 'shame' and boos. Shrivelled by Lady Bruce Gardyne - "I would like to remind the chairman that we are the Royal Horticultural Society, not the Surrey Horticultural Society" - Sir Simon fell to his knees before the Marchioness of Salisbury (a vice-president of the R.H.S. and owner of Hatfield House, who not only has a very much larger and more famous garden than Sir Simon but is also likely to have rather more money) to be neatly handbagged by the heavy 'they' had brought in, in the form of Baroness Elles, a member of the House of Lords, who explained to Sir Simon that if he did not allow the matter to be discussed, the society could be challenged on its decision in the courts. This was but the initial skirmish. The battle will take place at the special meeting to be held later in the year. Sir Simon is no doubt puzzled by all this fuss. Like 99% of the R.H.S.membership, he could probably find a gardening book suited to his needs on the shelves of one of the numerous branches of W.H. Smith and has had no need to make use of the Lindley Library in his life. As Sir Simon licks his wounds, perhaps the R.H.S. might keep an eye upon suitable presidential qualities in others. Former Guinness chairman, Ernest Saunders, is possibly available again. We also believe Peter Baring, recently retired chairman of a very old and respected merchant bank, has a little more time on his hands. If the RHS wishes to popularise its image further with a faintly plebeian touch, perhaps Cedric Brown, chief executive of British Gas plc, might be encouraged to pop outside to stake his pansies.

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD   JANUARY, 1996

[Ed.: The purpose of this exercise was mainly to present all the musings of Jim as he prefaced the JJA seedlists but some lists such as the two lists of 1996 contain a representative selection of the lists' comments on various genera, taxonomy and so on and so some of these are included here to give a flavour of those sections. These are, of course, all included in the section of seedlists archived in their entirety.]

WE SAY HELLO TO THE PRESENT CENTURY:  JANUARY, 1996

For decades we have resisted the advice of friends, who have been telling us that we "have to get a computer". As the present century draws to a close, we find ourselves in possession of one. Our younger son, who has just moved to Kansas, is conveniently storing his nearly new PC with us. We suspect that it will be thoroughly outdated by the time he returns. We cannot say that it has made the production of the present list any easier but
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it should make it a little more legible and aesthetically pleasing. We have kept a similar format to all our previous lists, so that those of you who take them apart and file them can continue to do so.

While we should like a beautifully designed list, 10 pt. type and mean margins are necessary to pack in anything like as much as we usually include. Those who cannot read newspapers may still have problems. Sadly, we have been unsuccessful in locating software to persuade our PC to collect, packet and despatch the seeds. We are not impressed. It seems we are not yet altogether dispensable.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE
While our main aim is to offer you seeds collected by ourselves, a vast amount of help from our friends in Britain and abroad is always much in evidence in our lists. Sincere thanks to all (the collectors) and to all our customers for continuing to support our work. Best wishes to all of you for 1996.

THE GREAT CALIFORNIAN WASH-OUT OF 1995
This might be an unfair description of our visit to the West in 1995 but it is certainly what had occurred before we arrived. The preceding winter and spring were exceptionally wet. About twice the average rainfall fell in most areas throughout the West. The snow-pack in the great mountain-ranges was almost without precedent and meant that the higher alpines had not even emerged when we left in August. After grumbling about a succession of dry seasons over the past decade, it may seem perverse for us to complain about a very wet one. Although certainly of great advantage to the vegetation in the long-term, it did create a few problems. The earliest flowers, like the *Erythroniums*, set little seed as there were no pollinating insects about or their pollen was washed off by the rain. Early humming-bird pollinated species, like *Fritillaria recurva*, suffered, as the birds had not arrived from the south. From our point of view, it was a difficult and extremely late season for seed. We had planned to stay a little later than we have in recent years, in the expectation of collecting more high altitude and late-flowering species. This was not possible as we found the season anything from two weeks to two or more months later than might have been expected. On the credit side, we were fortunate to be able to see superlative displays of flowers in some areas. The White Mountains were incredibly beautiful in late June. The early flowers were very late but the later flowers were on time so that almost everything was out at once. In most areas, it was the year of the Mariposa. The later *Calochortus* appeared in breathtaking quantity. The entire base of the Sawtooth Valley in Idaho was filled with millions of *Calochortus eurycarpus*. Every bulb seemed to have flowered, the smallest producing tiny flowers on short stems, creating a second layer below the larger ones.

OUR HIGH AND LATE CALIFORNIAN FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE
High and late collections may have been out of the question for us but, thanks to Californian friends, they are not absent from our list. John Andrews and Mike Broder have made October visits to such delectable high spots as Mt. Eddy and Jim and Georgie Robinett have travelled both north and south from their base at Sebastopol to collect lily seed in late September. The latter team will be well-known to many of you and we are grateful to them for enabling us to share their seed collections with you, now that they have discontinued issuing their own annual seed list. While they have not been able to send out either bulbs or seeds in 1995, they hope to be able to distribute living material again in 1996. Their seed-collecting forays will continue to be necessary for their own propagation programme and we hope you may benefit from time to time. Their late trip up North proved unusually eventful as they found themselves involved in a high-speed car-chase on Patrick Creek road, an old dirt road between California and Oregon. A Highway Patrol car, lights and sirens going, pursued a station wagon with three men in it, members of a gang of six, who had held up a store in Crescent City and "gone on to do other (unidentified) criminal things". The Wild West lives on.

DROUGHT STRIKES THE GREEN GREEN HILLS OF HOME
As our plane returned to the British Isles, the aspect from the air was distinctly Californian. In spite of the statistics beloved of the British, summer of 1995 in Wales in no way compared with our summer of 1976 in Dorset. The clay soil of our cool North slope still held moisture and there was a trickle of water in the stream at the bottom of our valley. Our good friends and neighbours Austin Hill and Rita Jukes had worked hard to keep the container-grown plants (mostly destined to expand the planting in our field in spring, 1996) well-watered. Though we cannot afford to be too concerned about what happens to our plants in our absence, we did feel more than a little guilty at leaving others with the responsibility of caring for them in such a difficult year. Fortunately the water kept flowing through the pipes in West Wales. Our supply is extracted from the mouth of the River Teifi, of which our own little stream is a tributary, and pumped all the way back up to us. In spite of vocal complaints to the contrary, water remains a cheap commodity in Britain. It should be - we have plenty of it.

ENGLISH WATER GOES DOWN THE DRAIN
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The superfluity of water which falls on Britain makes our 'droughts' the most bizarre fiascos. Like gardeners in many parts of the UK, we have had no cause for complaints against those responsible for supplying us with water. The same could certainly not be said for those who garden in Yorkshire and some other parts of these islands, where 'drought restrictions' continue. Those of you who live in drier climates with seasonal rainfalls would doubtless find the situation here both incomprehensible and surreal. You would expect to pay for what you used. In many parts of England & Wales, 'set charges' are normal. Ten people living in a modest house with leaking taps and watering their garden all day might pay less for their water than one careful person living in a mansion and not watering the garden at all. Don't feel sympathy for the water companies, they knew the situation when water was privatised some years ago. In 1976, most people here felt a (probably misguided) sense of social responsibility in the use of water. Attempts by some water companies to exploit this and claim an imagined moral high ground have rightly been resisted by their customers. These privatised monopolies are commercial concerns making substantial profits and no mercy should be shown to them by the consumer. Yorkshire Water started off the 1995 summer with its reservoirs full after a very wet winter. It allows a quarter of its water to run away through leaks in its supply system. It then declares record profits. Our own water supply, unlike most in the UK, is metered. We pay for what we use. As far as we are concerned, once the water has passed the meter, it is ours, we have paid for it and we can do whatever we choose to do with it. We are not concerned if the board of Welsh Water supplies it by buying bottles of Perrier and pouring them down the other end of the pipe (which is not far off from what is happening in Yorkshire). The trouble with monopolies is that it is we, the consumers, who will eventually have to pay for this corporate greed and inefficiency.

CALOCHORTUS: THE MARIPOSAS, CAT’S EARS AND FAIRY LANTERNS

The scope and diversity of this amazing genus is still little appreciated by the skilled growers of Eurasian bulbs, who have developed in recent decades. We continue to expand our numerous collections and (this) listing is possibly the most extensive ever offered. This year we can include material from Jim & Georgie Robinett - their knowledge of the Californians in their natural habitats is extensive - and they add to the vast amount of composite knowledge, shared by such enthusiasts as John Andrews, Wayne Roderick, Stan Farwig & Vic Girard, David King, Frank Callahan and Boyd Kline, to make this list possible. Most of the winter & spring growing species from the western USA are here, though we lack the summer-growers which extend south through Mexico to Guatemala. We were also too early in the very late 1995 season to collect much in the North, though we travelled up to Idaho and Washington in late July. Though almost all seed was collected in 1995, we have included a few older collections to fill in gaps - Calochortus seed stores very well. Unusually for us, we do not see an advantage in quoting the sections of the genus against each species. Cultivation can be better learned from noting the habitats of each collection. There are no generalisations to he made about cultivation, in spite of some dreadfully reprocessed 'received wisdom' we have seen published lately (in 'The Plantsman' for instance). Dr Sylvia Martinelli’s recent accounts in several UK publications are the most reliable available but it must be remembered that she writes from experience of a relatively restricted number of mainly Californian species. The early-flowering, low altitude Fairy Lanterns fit in best with the Mediterranean growth-cycle of many Eurasian bulbs. The late-flowering Mariposas might be compatible with such groups as the Oncocylus & Regelia Irises. The species from the cold, dry climates of the Great Basin and further east are proving the most difficult – we suspect they may be best left unwatered until late winter or spring. Even the later Californians seem best left until midwinter before watering. We are also provisionally convinced that these need no further watering after the first buds open - the quality of the bulbs will be much better. We are trying to establish as many as possible in cultivation and already we have home-grown seed of a few available. We appreciate that the range listed is rather daunting but we cannot overstress their variation.

DELPHINIUM : SCARLET GOLD & AZURE LARKSPURS OF THE WEST

At last we have the year of the Delphinium. Since 1989, we have hoped to be able to strike it lucky with seed. Collecting a wide range is indeed more a matter of luck than planning or skill. Of course, there are many gaps here - less than half the Californians are listed - but the range this season is truly representative of the immense & unique variation of this genus in the American West. All here are more or less summer-dormant perennials, retiring underground to a variety of rootstocks when it is hot and dry. All could be grown in bulb-frame conditions in cooler, summer-wet climates but the larger ones will have to be attempted in the open garden. Choose as well-drained and as sunny a site as possible for all. Though we have never experienced any difficulties personally, seed germination has given problems to some in the past. We suggest that they require quite a long cool period. A few degrees above freezing for a couple of months or so should be enough for most. Those from colder areas may need longer. Putting the pots outside in the UK has worked for us. If they do not come up the first year, they come up the next, as with most summer-dormant species. Many of these are very local plants, seldom occurring
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in large numbers; many flower early and mature seed quickly. Taxonomically, the genus is difficult with many hybrids. We have found Michael Warnock's account in the new 'Jepson' very workable and realistic so far and the nomenclature we use, for the Californians, follows his assessment of the genus.

ERYTHRIONIUM: THE FAWN LILIES – FLOWERS OF THE MELTING SNOWS

We list here an unprecedented range of seed from the western members of this fashionable genus, in spite of a very poor season for these early flowering plants. Most grow in well drained habitats usually in light shade. When areas are hot & dry in summer, the corms are likely to be growing deeply among stones, where soil-temperature & moisture remain constant Their preference for serpentine areas is marked - singularly inhospitable, infertile soils, deficient in nitrogen, phosphorous & calcium, with high concentrations of magnesium. We suggest caution in attempting these in pure peat – a mix of half granite chippings and half sphagnum peat or leafsoil might be more appropriate. Species from warmer, drier sunnier habitats might be best in well-drained sites in full sun in cool, wet climates. These may need a summer-rest All seem remarkably temperature-hardy and many grow surprisingly well in the open garden in wetter climates. Seed of most will come up easily after a sufficient cool period but the very high altitude group, (E. pusaterii, E. pluriflorum & E. purpurascens) are difficult to germinate. They appear to require a very long cold period or repeated freezing.

FRIITLLARIA: SPECIALISTS OF SERPENTINE SCREE, GRANITE AND ADOBE CLAY

About one-fifth of this genus occurs in N. America, centred on N. California, where it appears to be actively evolving, showing much variation within the current concept of each 'species'. Names here mostly follow the account in Jepson, which is itself derivative from work done by Roger MacFarlane, whose names are largely in use in the UK. Some of those who know the genus well in California are not impressed by the current treatment of some 'species'. Individual populations of species like F. affinis (F. lanceolata) and F. biflora can look more distinct than many Mediterranean populations given specific status. It is quantifying the differences and finding a degree of consistency in them that is the problem. For gardeners, the articles written by Dr Sylvia Martinelli in the March & June 1992 A.G.S. Bulletins are the most useful references available. Successful cultivation of these plants is much more widespread now than in the past. The basic criteria would appear to be well-drained, lime-free, low nutrient composts and, in the UK, giving them their first winter watering quite late in November, or even December. Excess nitrogen should be avoided, especially for serpentine species - please note our comments about the chemical characteristics of this under Erythronium listings.

IRIS: ENDLESS PERMUTATIONS OF THE PACIFIC COAST RAINBOW

These Pacific Coast irises (Series Californicae) exemplify better than any other genus how much speciation is proceeding actively in this area - variation, intergradation and hybridization are considerable. Dr Lee Lenz’s 1958 classification (adopted by Munz, by Brian Mathew in 'The Iris' and more or less by 'Jepson') is a brilliant and acceptable compromise but do not imagine his taxa are always clearly defined units in the wild. In gardens, much material is of hybrid origin (bear this in mind with the cultivated seed listed) and remember that many wild plants are likely to be both less showy and less easy to grow than garden hybrids. Most grow wild in light woodland or among scrub, usually on steep slopes - they need excellent drainage and a neutral to slightly acid soil. A site in sun, in N. Europe, might be preferable to half-shade. A few, such as I. hartwegii columbiana, I. fernaldii and I. munzii, might be best in a bulb-frame.

LILIUM: CAPRICIOUS ARISTOCRATS FROM THE COAST TO THE HIGH SIERRAS

We have not listed a good range of the western species since 1989. Seed ripens late from mid-September into October, long after we have left California in recent years. Most of the following are from Jim & Georgie Robinett, who know this genus well and can be relied on to collect top-quality, correctly named material, with a few gaps filled in by John Andrews, who can usually be expected to reach the parts other people cannot reach. The species fall very roughly into two groups: the dry-growers with ovoid bulbs with longer, unjointed scales and the wet growers with rhizomatous bulbs with shorter, jointed scales. In the latter group, L. pardalinum, the equivalent of the eastern L. superbum, is the focus of a number of taxa. These have been placed under it at subspecific level by Mark Skinner in 'Jepson' but we keep them at specific level here, as we feel this is of more use to gardeners. There is a great deal of introgression and hybridization: many stands of L. pardalinum itself are extremely variable. This and L. humboldtii, a dry-grower, have been crossed in cultivation (the old ‘Bellingham Hybrids’). There is no reason they & others should not cross in nature. Obviously the wet-growers are going to be much more amenable to the open-garden in cool temperate climates, seldom needing the very wet conditions of their natural habitats. These are well-suited to the peat-bed or similar humus-rich conditions. In all cases, the westerners are plants of lime-free soils. Seed sown in winter should give no problems. We had great success from sowing our 1989 refrigerated, seed-bank seed in January, 1995, so the few collections made pre-1995 need give no concern.
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Grow *Lilium* from seed for fertile, virus-free plants. Sow all as soon as you can: *L. candidum*, for instance, usually comes up by November here. If not sown early enough, it will just wait till the next season to germinate. Others will not appear above ground for some considerable time. With some, like *L. martagon*, which germinate hypogally, forming a tiny bulb underground before producing true leaves, expect a delay, in any case. The material from Georgia is from 1995 collections & is unlikely to be available from 1996 colls. In spite of what we have seen written to the contrary, *Lilium* seed stores extremely well if kept refrigerated under dry conditions.

**PENTSTEMON: THE CENTRE OF DIVERSITY IN OUR SEED BANK**

We had hoped to present you with a good range of 1995 *Penstemon* collections but the season was such a late one that it was only possible to gather a few of the earlier ones in July & August. Nevertheless, deep in our refrigerator, our seed-bank contains a wide selection of many of the most outstanding western species. In the opinion of many, seven-year old seed gives the best germination. We can give you the opportunity to put this to the test. Jim Almond in the UK has experimented successfully with some of our older *Penstemon* collections in recent years and we believe everything here will still be perfectly viable. For those not convinced, the date of collection is given in all cases and there are plenty more recent collections here also. The choice is yours. With very few exceptions, these species are from areas with warm dry summers and cold, dry winters. Few can be easily grown outside in climates such as that of the UK, where summer rainfall is high. We have difficulty convincing UK growers that these need the opposite conditions to the widely-grown hybrids, mainly derived from a few Mexican species in Sect. Elyrigera, plants of a summer rainfall area and far from typical of this diverse genus. Give all here as much sun as you can in as well-drained a site as possible. Obviously for N. European growers, the dwarfer species might be more manageable in raised beds, rocks gardens or the alpine-house. The heath-like or thyme-like, mat-forming species in Sect. Caespitosi have been very successful in the UK under such conditions. The dwarfer members of Sect. Cristati are also potentially desirable alpine-house plants, though many are proving challenging. Many of the better-known and easier rock-garden species are in Sect. Erianthera & Sect. Saccanthera, most numerous in the Pacific Coast states, though a few extend east into Montana & Utah. The western ones are likely to be easier than the more eastern ones. Though we have only a few representative collections of Sect. Penstemon, in general a group of less horticultural value, there are still some good things here and the mountain plants should give little trouble. The taller species in Sect. Spectables, Sect. Gentianoides, etc. are among the most sumptuous of herbaceous perennials but most are essentially desert plants, which, though temperature hardy, will need very sunny, dry conditions to thrive. Remember that this is very much a genus of the intermountain area, where 104 species make their home. There are 63 species listed for Utah with 29 in the Uintah Basin alone. The last, comparatively small area is the centre of diversity for this genus. Species such as we list here are typical of the genus; the Mexicans or eastern woodlanders are the exceptions. We have followed nomenclature used by Holmgren (in the 'Intermountain Flora' & "Jepson") and Neese (in 'A Utah Flora'), all modern accounts. Holmgren's classification into Sections is given after each specific name to give some indication of the plant's affinities. This may be helpful regarding cultivation. Norman Deno has done a lot of work on germination of *Penstemon* and, as a general rule, it may be assumed that almost all the species here are plants which will germinate at a low temperature.

**TERRY ENSURES OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE OF THE BRAZILIAN BLUES IN PUKEKOHE**

One good and loyal customer said to us recently, "Your seed's expensive but it does come up." We don't think our seed is expensive actually but then we have to finance our collecting and the cultivation of the seed-parents, as well as trying to scrape a living from selling the seed. If you think it is too expensive then the obvious solution is not to buy it and to go to another supplier. We usually reckon that, in most cases, a packet of seeds should be about the same price as a single plant of the species concerned. What should we charge for seed from a plant currently listed at £95 for a bulb, which "may not flower for 14 years". 'Plants of Distinction' (Suffolk, UK) are apparently currently offsetting *Worsleya rayneri* (under the invalid name *W. procera*) at this price. Terry Hatch, of Puakeohe, New Zealand, has just sent us a few seeds (which may well flower before 14 years elapse). There are only 60 and we almost did not offer them to you, thinking they were too few to list. However, if we put 3 in each packet and charge 'code F' for it, perhaps 'Plants of Distinction' might buy them all and turn their £120 investment into £5700 (in less than 14 years). This is the mythical "Blue Amaryllis", a monotypic genus, which has been included in both Amaryllis and Hippeastrum. It only grows in crevices on sheer, granite cliffs 1000m up in the Organ Mts. of Brazil. The strongly falcate leaves emerge from the extraordinarily long-necked bulbs, over one metre high at maturity (yes, the bulbs), curving down to the ground. The flowering stem appears from the centre of these (after 14 years, maybe) and carries up to eight, huge, pale blue amaryllis-flowers, edged with deeper blue. Grown successfully in parts of the USA, Australia & New Zealand, obviously it needs to be more or less frost-free. Growing it hard with plenty air and sunlight is the recorded recipe for success. Underpotting in fibrous,
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orchid-type compost and liquid-feeding are recommended. We hope the seed comes up and flowers within 14 years.

WALK RIGHT IN TO THE NORTH AMERICAN BACKYARD
While we have no intention of suggesting you can save the world in your backyard, a great number of rare plant species are being preserved and propagated internationally by a few thousand specialist gardeners, many of them in North America. Maintaining these in cultivation is not at all the same as allowing them to survive naturally along with their entire habitat but often these species have already lost much of their habitat or they were extremely local plants in the first place. In recent years horticulture has sometimes been denigrated. A legislative growth-industry fuelled by bureaucrats and self-serving 'charities' attempts to obstruct the free movement of cultivated material internationally between gardeners. We seek the widest possible dissemination of such material and reassure gardeners that their knowledge, traditional skills and understanding of plant-life will be of greater importance in the future than cosmetic legislation.

WITH LOVE FROM BOYD'S PURPLE HEART
*Trillium rivale* is not in any way 'endangered' and we have no doubt that every plant of this sold in Europe has been raised from cultivated seed. Nevertheless, the entire genus *Trillium* may be next on the CITES hit-list. While this remains relatively undisturbed in its home, it is certainly local on the serpentes of the Klamath Ranges along the California-Oregon line. Few people know the plants there better than Boyd Kline, retired joint-founder of the Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery. For decades Boyd searched for outstanding clones of this little *Trillium* and selected them from seed. His 'Purple Heart' is the most famous but there are fine pinks as well. Seed from Boyd's Medford, Oregon, backyard is listed under 1.920.520.

WAYNE'S BABY IS ALIVE AND WELL WITH JIM AND GEORGIE
Extinction caused by taxonomists is increasingly common. When a new account of a genus is written, taxa are simply 'disappeared' by an author who inclines towards 'lumping'. The more specimens looked at and the more wild plants studied, the stronger the inclination may be to 'lump'. This is not so much a reflection of fashion in current taxonomic thinking but a manifestation of the flawed, outdated concepts on which the subject is based. Whatever its pretensions, the function of taxonomy is to provide an efficient labelling system for use in other fields. This it often fails to do. Those involved with conservation might be dismayed when they find their 'rare and endangered species' is extinguished, subsumed into a common, widespread one. Gardeners simply want names to write on labels. From what we have been told, *Fritillaria roderickii* is both rare and endangered but as far as "Jepson", the standard work on the Californian flora, is concerned, it has already vanished, a mere synonym of *F. biflora*. It grows a very long way from any (other) *F. biflora*, up on the N.W. Pacific coast. If we recollect correctly, Wayne Roderick told us he knew of it in two sites: one in a cemetery and another at the edge of a cliff which was falling into the sea. It is a dwarf plant which can be distinguished by its obtuse, rather than flaring, perianth segments in brown, tipped with white. It may have as much to do with *F. liliacea* as with present-day, southern populations of *F. biflora*. Those of you who keep up-to-date with name changes, will be thinking that what we are writing about is available as *F. biflora* 'Martha Roderick'. Yes and no. 'Martha Roderick' is certainly a clone of *F. roderickii* but she is by no means a typical one. The problem with clones is that they can lose their vigour or succumb to disease. The only way to maintain a plant in the long-term is to keep raising it from seed. This is precisely what Jim & Georgie Robinett have been doing in their backyard at Sebastopol, California, with stock from an original wild collection by Wayne Roderick. Grow 'Martha Roderick' by all means but don't imagine you have typical *F. roderickii* or typical *F. biflora*. Roger Macfarlane is convinced the correct name for *F. roderickii* is *F. grayana* (on priority grounds) but that is another matter. Even if everyone agrees this is the case, at least we still have a name for this race. The Robinett's seed is under ref. 1.372.050.

FASHIONABLE JAPANESE SETTLE ON THE EAST COAST
Gardening in the N.E. Atlantic States of the USA is a challenge. Cold winters are less of a problem than the high humidity of the hot summers. However, many *Epimedium* and *Arisaema*, from the winter-cold woodlands of Japan, grow to perfection, among them the fashionable *Arisaema sikokianum*, whose large dark purple and white spathes surround the striking white spadix with its globose apex. There is a detailed account of this in the superlative "Japonica Magnifica" by Raymond Booth & Don Elick, who write "... the prey of the commercial collector... *A. sikokianum* in its chosen valley has become much reduced in numbers... the tubers cannot be divided... seed is the only way." Find seed from Jim Jones' backyard in Lexington, Massachusetts, in 'Species from other areas' and establish fertile stock. It can't be done with one collected tuber.
**EASTERN SAGE FINDS A DEVOTEE IN NEW MEXICO**

Richard Riedy gardens on soul-destroying adobe-clay in Los Lunas, south of Albuquerque, where they had less than half their normal rain in 1995. Severely cold winters and hot summers create further problems. Some of the Turkish steppe species we collected in the 1980's have adapted well. We have been able to list the N.E. Turkish endemic, violet-purple *Verbascum wiedemannianum* (ref 980.850) from Richard’s backyard seed. Even more local, only known from around the town of Ermenek, SE of Konya, is *Salvia albimaculata*, (ref 842.052) which we made a special effort to collect in 1988. This is one of the shrubby-based group with grey, pinnate foliage. Stems of 20-30cm. carry large, striking flowers in royal-blue with tidy white blotches on the lower lips. "Very handsome" comments Ian Hedge in his account of the genus in the 'Flora of Turkey'. Few people germinated the original collection and Richard warns that he has not been successful with garden seed. He propagates it by pegging down the stems. The seed looks good.

**OUT OF AFRICA: semper aliquid novi Africa affert: SEPTEMBER, 1996**

One of the dubious benefits of attending a Scottish school which provided a classical education, even for the less academically inclined (woodwork, metalwork & Latin for the 'intellectually challenged'), is the opportunity to indulge in the occasional sneer at the grammatical inaccuracies of the dog Latin descriptions of new species produced by present-day botanists. After six years enforced study of the dead language & its literature, we fear only a vestigial recollection of the grammar & vocabulary remains, along with the odd memorable phrase, such as the one above. We cannot recollect who said it originally but we are sure it was neither Ms Blixen nor Ms Streep. In this list & the next one, which we hope you will receive about the end of the year, we hope to bring you something new out of Africa. Jim tagged along with our dear friend Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver Botanic Garden, on a one month visit to the interior. It was intended largely as an educational exercise for Jim. This it certainly was, as Panayoti has a considerable knowledge & experience of the vegetation, has visited the areas before and is involved with the cultivation of a wide range of African material at Denver. While the educational requirements were more than fulfilled, the bonus of some seed collections was considerable. Many of these were possible through the kindness of South African farmers & land-owners not only in allowing us access on to their property but insisting on driving us about in their Land-Rovers and accommodating us in their homes. We were overwhelmed by their kindness but also by their knowledge of & interest in the plants growing on their land.

**BLOODY FYNBOS**

The areas through which we travelled all lay within the summer rainfall region of South Africa, which after all is by far the greater area. The comparatively tiny part of the south-western Cape, where the cold-fronts sweep in from the S. Atlantic bringing the winter rain & producing a Mediterranean-type climate has grown out of all geographical proportion in the minds of the world's botanists & gardeners. There is an extremely good reason for this. Though the area might be comparatively small, the proportion of the world's plant species which grow there is enormous. On the nutrient-poor Cape sandstones shrubby species of the Proteaceae, Restionaceae, Erica and so on have indulged in a frenzy of speciating creating the fynbos. Evezy niche in a complexity of mountain ranges has a narrow endemic. At the centre of this, the world’s richest concentration of species, lies Kirstenbosch, surely the most beautifully situated botanic garden in the world. The gardeners & botanists there are primarily concerned with what lies under their noses. Indeed, as caretakers of the richest flora in the world, they should be. Such a seemingly inexhaustible source of interest can also be a prison. "Bloody fynbos" one Kirstenbosch botanist remarked to us. The taxonomic & ecological work must seem unending. The genera must seem to be speciating faster than they can be described. Gardeners have so much on their doorstep that they dare look no further. Plants from high on the distant mountain-ranges of the drier interior or those from the summer-wet Cape & Natal Drakensberg are not easily grown in the Mediterranean climate of Kirstenbosch. They have as much relevance there as the fynbos & associated species have to gardeners in most of northern Europe & N. America. In this list & the next we hope to convince northerners that they must look beyond the S.W. Cape for the species to grow.

**DRY UP ANNE**

Earlier this year we commented on the bizarre water-shortages in England, a country where some people pay more for their water than the residents of Las Vegas but can still be prosecuted for using a hose-pipe to water their gardens. Since then, one water company hit the headlines by attempting to persuade gardeners to pave over their lawns and grow xerophytic plants, quoting the advice of their ‘gardening expert’ Anne Swithinbank.
These sound like perfectly good ideas to us but not for the reason that they might increase the profits of these monopolies. We hope they paid you well for your advice, Anne.

SWITCHING ON GEOFFREY AND CONTEMPLATING NIGEL’S NAVAL
We remember Anne before she became an 'expert' & achieved fame. Years ago she was glasshouse fore-person at Wisley, following a period at Kew. We have had a soft-spot for her, ever since we found her on her knees attempting to rescue & organise an extensive collection of South African plants with field-data, which had been donated to Wisley but cast into outer darkness by her superior - a parks department man, if ever there was one. Memories of S. African species must have faded long ago. We cringed at her more recent inability to explain that the Gladiolus she was looking at during a broadcast from the Mediterranean had nothing to do with the large hybrids bred from S. African summer-growers. Geoffrey Smith is no better on S. Africans with a waffle of disinformation on Dierama dracomontanum. Geoffrey is always good for a laugh, however. Even Dr Richards has not heard of Geoffiey's Solenoid Primulas (sorry Geoffrey, it was just a lapsus linguae we know), Don't switch off. Here is Nigel Coleborne explaining that Omphalodes has been given its name because its 'seed-capule' looks like a navel. It may look like your navel Nigel but it's not like ours. James Bond pondered on the skill of French doctors in creating interesting female navels. We doubt if Ian Fleming had four, depressed globose nutlets in mind. Of course, the greatest 'expert' of all has recently passed on to double-dig the Elysian fields. Hottest tip to seize the throne is Alan Titchmarsh, who has cultivated an ingratiating style (would you buy a second-hand Carya from this man?). He is definitely a man of integrity, however, and has publicised the fact that he has turned-down "a six figure sum" (for him to do this, we assume it was nearer £100,000 than £999,999) to endorse peat-based products.

MIGHT DR JOHN PRESCRIBE A DOSE OF DIGITALIN?
If 'the media' want a 'dandelion-expert', one of the above might well be contacted but the shrewd producer will say 'get me the dandelion-expert'. Not that there is much demand at present for 'dandelion experts' but if one is ever needed, Dr A.J. Richards will be whipped round in a taxi to the Newcastle-upon-Tyne studio. No-one is going to dispute that he is 'the expert' on the genus Taraxacum (except perhaps another Taraxacum-expert). Few would dispute that he is also a 'real expert' on the genus Primula. However, we had our suspicion that he is not an expert on common-sense confirmed recently. We had some misgivings that we had been rather hard on him a few years ago, when we criticised his creationist concepts of the population dynamics of Digitalis & his support for 'ethnic cleansing' to sustain Degenia velebitica. When the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, placed a potful of Androcymbium europaeum before the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee, Dr John opposed an award because someone has listed this as 'rare & endangered'. It would seem to us that this might be an additional reason to give it an award & publicise it. If the species had been extinct, Dr Richards would doubtless have commended the conservation efforts of Kew and encouraged others to preserve it in cultivation more widely.

ALSTROEMERIA, the 'Peruvian Lilies' come from Chile. This spectacular genus, either placed in the Liliaceae or separated with Bomarea into the family Alstroemeriaceae, has its centre in Chile. The variation, complexity & colours of its flowers is immense, as is the range of habitats within a limited area. More species than A. aurea & the A. ligtu hybrids can be expected to prove good garden-plants in the UK but most will be best grown in a raised bed or bulb-frame. In pots, the tubers can be vulnerable to freezing, though the only one we had damaged in the low temperatures of the 1995-96 winter was the coastal A. pelegrina & even then we did not lose it completely. Ideally seed should be given a warm period followed by a cool period for germination. We have always found this occurs at a reasonably even temperature between 5 & 10 degrees C (40-50F). Soaking seed in warm water for 24 hours before sowing, then placing the seed at the bottom of a domestic refrigerator should give the even 5C required, though we have found conventional sowing in autumn quite satisfactory ourselves. The names follow those in the meticulously researched 'Die Gattung Alstroemeria in Chile' by E. Bayer (1987). We are grateful to Dr Bayer for her help over one or two problems.

COLCHICUM: THE MEDITERRANEAN BULB SEASON STARTS HERE
As we prepare to mail this list, the first Colchicum have been in flower for some time. Under glass, the flowers of C. parnassicum always appear first here, usually in August, just as the last of the 'spring' flowers, some Chilean Rhodophiala & Alstroemeria spp. are finishing. Nothing has been watered for weeks & we shall not water anything for another month or so. The flowering of these Mediterranean 'bulbs' is triggered by changes in the mean soil temperature, not by moisture, though obviously pouring water on them lowers the soil temperature. From now on we shall almost always have a Colchicum in flower through till April. They are slower than some genera from seed & germination can be irregular but they usually all come up in time & grow on steadily without
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too much trouble. We think it more sensible to keep Colchicum & Merendera together but the synonyms are given in brackets for those who wish to 'split' them. It is all just a matter of opinion.

CROCUS: THE QUINTESSENCE OF SPRING (AND AUTUMN AS WELL)
To generalise, which we do not usually like to do, Crocus is the most difficult in cultivation, among the main genera of 'bulbs' we list. Because a few crocuses are familiar garden plants in Europe, many gardeners assume all are easy and turn to the imagined challenges of Fritillaria or some of the Narcissus spp. Many of the 'species' listed cheaply in less specialised bulb catalogues are of hybrid origin or are clones, often untypical of the species as a whole & selected for mass production. If you want good reliable garden-plants, these are for you. For the specialist grower, we are attempting to build up basic fertile parent-stocks, raised from wild material where possible, as a source of hand-pollinated seeds for our lists. This is less easy with Crocus than with most other genera, as they have few seeds in a capsule & maintaining quite a large number of corms is necessary. Collection is also quite critical & troublesome. Seed of many will always be expensive & in short supply. In our efforts to list a good range, we have been much assisted by several other growers, particularly David Stephens, who takes the National Crocus Collection in his care seriously. Of those listed currently, we could recommend only C. banaticus, C. biflorus subsp. pulchricolor, C. flavus, C. kotschyanus subsp. kotschyanus & C. veluchensis for the open garden in the UK. Among the more reliable ones for the bulb-frame or alpinehouse are C. adanensis, C asumaniae, C. goulimi, C. malyi & C. niveus. Standard reference for the genus is Brian Mathew's model monograph 'The Crocus' (1982).

CYCLAMEN: ALL THINGS TO ALL GARDENERS
Few genera inspire such devotion as cyclamen. Their flowers & beautiful foliage can be enjoyed almost throughout the year, though, of course, their peak seasons for flowering are spring & autumn. We have not had a good year for seed, on top of the fact that we lost many stock plants in the hot summer of 1995, when we were in the USA Finding the corms dehydrated or cooked under glass was not a disaster which we had anticipated in our cool Welsh climate. We learn by experience. We have not, in fact, been trying too hard with this genus, as we felt that there were sufficient sources of supply, but seed remains in steady demand and we shall try to expand to a complete range again, as soon as we can. With some help from friends, we have a reasonable, if depleted, amount of seed available this season. Seed from selected flower & leaf forms will be found at the end of the list in the section dealing with garden hybrids & selections. Only the basic wild species, if possible from material with field data, are here. C. hederifolium, C. coum & a few others are, of course, reliable garden-plants but the majority can be grown to perfection, in the UK, only under glass, safest kept frost-free. All, including C. rohfsianum, will take very brief periods of light frost but some measure to prevent prolonged or severe freezing is only common-sense. Likewise, regarding extremely high summer temperatures: shading & preventing dehydration when dormant are sensible also. Sowing seed straight from the capsule is a counsel of perfection. Reasonably fresh seed should be perfectly satisfactory. Like most of the species in this list, these germinate at low-temperatures & should be sown in late summer or autumn. Soaking seed in hot (not boiling) water & leaving for 24 hours at room-temperature before sowing appears to aid germination. Always keep pots of ungerminated seed (they will appear in time) and guard against mice, which love them as much as we do. The best reference is C. Grey-Wilson's monograph, 'The Genus Cyclamen' (1988).

FRITILLARIA: TEMPERAMENTAL DARLINGS OF THE BULB ENTHUSIASTS
Possibly the genus most esteemed by the more specialised of British bulb-enthusiasts at present. Fashions change. Reginald Farrer, writing in 1913, after conceding it is a "lovely race", condemns them as " very miffy or mimpish, or both, and the family all round has a bad character...not to mention that an enormous number have more or less stinking bells of dingy chocolate and greenish tones, which often appear transfigured by the enthusiasm of those who desire to get rid of them ...." Perhaps they were beyond his capabilities as a grower. Their "miffiness" is one of their charms adding stimulation to the challenge of their successful cultivation. Most, in fact, are not at all difficult to grow in standard bulb-frame conditions or, perhaps better, in pots in a well-ventilated unheated greenhouse in the UK. Few, however, are easy in the open garden in Britain. Of those listed here, F. messanensis subsp. gracilis. F. pallidiflora, F. pontica, F. thessalia ionica, perhaps F. acmopetala & certainly the native F. meleagris should be growable outside in most UK gardens. Most species grow in comparatively small populations in very limited areas in the wild and enthusiasts should make every effort to maintain fertile stock from seed in cultivation. As with Crocus & Narcissus, we are progressing towards our aim of establishing authentic parent-stocks of all species, if possible raised from wild seeds, for the production of hand-pollinated seed for our lists. This season all listed are cultivated and, with the help of several other enthusiasts, we have a more comprehensive range than ever before. We all await a monograph on this genus by Martyn Rix. In the meantime, "The Bulb Book" is the best reference.
HELEBORUS: CLASSIC WINTER FLOWERS CURRENTLY IN FASHION
We list a very full representative range of this genus, almost all 1996 collected wild seeds. This is largely possible through the efforts of Will McLewin, not only with his own material from S.E. Europe but also in arranging collections by local botanists in Georgia & Croatia if you are interested in this genus, order & sow the seed without delay. Place it at normal outdoor temperatures. Though there is still plenty of time, late-sown seed (after the weather has cooled down in autumn), may not germinate until the following winter. Soaking seed in hot (not boiling) water and leaving it at room temperature for a day before sowing may help germination the first winter. Like almost all species in Ibis list, these germinate at low temperatures. Keeping seed warm after sowing will inhibit germination. For more information & accounts of each species, refer to 'Hellebores' by Brian Mathew or 'The Gardener's Guide to Growing Hellebores' by Graham Rice & Elizabeth Strangman. While we use the classification proposed by the former (and accepted by the latter), it must be appreciated that this is only a reasoned compromise. We stress that the species of Section Helleborastrum seldom comply with the criteria used to divide them into the artificial concept of 'species' — flower colour, overwintering leaves and free or joined carpels are not consistent features. Most colonies are extremely variable and there is a great deal of intergradation. Such problems are being considered in an ongoing series of articles, by Brian Mathew & Will McLewin in 'The New Plantsman'.

IRIS: EASY GARDEN PLANTS AND JUNOS TO CHALLENGE THE SPECIALIST
We cannot generalise about this large & diverse genus, restricted to the Northern Hemisphere but native to almost every type of cold-climate habitat. All the Iris seed, currently available from this area, is listed here as all are best sown in autumn or early winter. Most fall into three groups. The bearded irises (Section Iris), most of which can be grown in a well-drained site in full sun outside in the UK but some of the Turkish species are not so easy & merit bulb-frame conditions. The spurias (Series Spuriae) usually make good, easy garden plants in most of Europe & N. America They tend to be plants from areas with cold winters & hot, dry summers, though often from habitats very wet in spring, as well as in scrub & grassland. The junos (Subgenus Scorpiris) include some of the most difficult of bulbs to challenge & frustrate the specialist. There are also comparatively easily grown ones which will be no trouble in a bulb-frame or in pots in the alpine-house. So, do read the comments about these & don't waste your money (& also the efforts others have made to produce this seed) by trying to grow the difficult ones before you have grown the easier species. Several juno listings are from Alan McMurtrie (Toronto, Canada), who is mainly involved in hybridising within this group but has hand-pollinated spare flowers of some of the species to make 'pure' species material available. The best reference for all the species is 'The Iris' by Brian Mathew.

NARCISSUS: the wild daffodils of the west. Unlike most of the main genera of 'bulbs' in this section (Colchicum, Crocus, Fritillaria and so on), which have the centre of their diversity & distribution in Turkey, Narcissus is very much a western genus, spread south from Britain to N.W. Africa and centred on Spain. Many species from higher rainfall areas or moist, montane habitats in Spain & Portugal grow well outside in UK gardens. Some, however, from drier areas, especially the Moroccan ones, need a dry, summer rest. These are ideal alpine-house or bulb-frame plants, especially valuable as many flower during winter & very early spring. A great many of the original wild collections from which (the following) cultivated seed has been grown, were made by John Blanchard, whose lifetime's work with this genus is unrivalled. We follow the nomenclature used in his monograph, 'Narcissus - A Guide to Wild Daffodils', the best reference work on the genus. It can be described as an informed gardener's compromise as far as names are concerned. A thorough botanical revision of the genus would appear to be badly needed but it would be very unlikely to suit both botanists & gardeners, so it is perhaps better unwritten. Many species are both extremely variable & ill-defined. We have to deal with a diversity of taxonomic concepts. The leading current 'splitter', the Spanish botanist Fernandez Casas, whose work recalls that of Pugsley with the trumpet daffodils, has now moved on to the Moroccan populations, where previously we had only Maire's 'lump'n'split' names (which required very long labels). Most descriptions are wholly inadequate to define the taxon concerned and distinguish it from others, in any case. Keys just do not work when applied to wild populations. Gardeners, however, will find the sum of characteristics in most populations distinct enough. 'Splits' are shorter to write out but it is very much a question of 'take your pick' concerning the name you stick on them.

Species from Southern Africa, Seeds from Jim & Jenny Archibald
Our main wild collections for 1996 were made in the summer-rainfall area of South Africa on a visit with Panayoti Kelaidis of Denver Botanic Garden. As all these are from summer-growing plants, we see no point in encouraging you to sow the seeds now & we are holding them back as a feature of our next list. In effect, by storing them, we are 'turning them round' for you & they will be sent out at an appropriate time for sowing. Most, if not all, of these appear to germinate at warm-temperatures (whereas almost all material in this list germinates at low-
temperatures). This makes sense, as these summer-rainfall species grow in summer, not during the cold, dry winters of this region. As we made no collections from winter-growers, we are listing material of these from Rachel & Rod Saunders, whose travels in search of S. African seeds extend far beyond the confines of the comparatively small part of S. Africa with a frost-free Mediterranean climate. We hope this part of the list will be an educational introduction to this region for cold-climate gardeners.

**The summer-growers & winter-growers of southern Africa**

Experienced gardeners do not tend to think too much about summer-growers & winter-growers. You plant your daffodils & tulips in the autumn and your dahlias & gladioli in the spring. But what about the *Gladiolus* species the more specialised gardeners plant with the summer-dormant 'bulbs'? Yes, the hardier ones come from a Mediterranean climate in the northern hemisphere but most of the S. African species need to be planted in autumn as well, as most come from a Mediterranean-type climate in the southern hemisphere. Why then do we plant the tall garden hybrids of S. African species in spring? Simply because these were bred from the smaller number of summer growing members in the genus not the winter-growing ones. There are both summer-growers & winter-growers in the same genus. This makes it impossible to generalise about the cultivation of any widespread S African genus. Nowhere have we come across anyone who stresses this all important dichotomy.

We have found little but inane generalisations about most S. African genera, usually based on the low altitude, winter-growers from a small area in the S.W. Cape. This makes life difficult as it is absolutely fundamental to growing the plants. With S. African plants, you simply have to know whether each individual species comes from the winter rainfall area or the summer rainfall area, before you know how to grow it. At the risk of being tedious, we have tried to underline this essential division throughout this section of the list. To make it all more difficult for you & make you work hard, we have included both summer-growers and winter-growers from a single genus together here. In every case, the information is there for you but you have to read it. A fair generalisation on S. African species for UK gardeners might be; the summer-growers are the ones you might be able to grow in your garden without much trouble & the winter-growers are the ones you can't. There are exceptions. In future lists, we shall be kinder & list only winter-growing S. Africans in this earlier list, along with all the other low temperature winter-growers: *hellebores, cyclamen*, peonies, most of the northern hemisphere 'bulbs', etc. Summer-growers will be listed separately later. So, the next list in winter, 1996-97, will include high altitude collections of summer-growing members of the monocot genera *Agapanthus, Albuca, Aristeia, Dierama, Kniphofia, Ledebouria, Moreaea & Watsonia* as well as herbaceous & shrubby species belonging to such genera as *Alepidea, Aloe, Aptosimum, Cotyledon, Crassula, Diascia, Erica, Euryops, Garuleum, Glumicalyx, Gomphosigma, Helichrysum, Hirpicium, Indigofera, Lotoxonot, Nemesia, Osteospermum, Pelargonium, Phygellus*, *Plexipus*, *Protea*, *Sebaea*. *Streptocarpus, Sutera, Sutherlandia, Vernonnia, Zaluzianskya* and no doubt several others.

**ANDROCYMBIUM**: the colchicums go south to the Cape. In recent years, we have listed seed from one of the few Mediterranean species, collected at the northern limit for this genus, which has about 30 species distributed south through E. Africa to the Cape. These are very close to *Colchicum* but some are scapose & the flowers are surrounded by an involucre of bract-like leaves. The flower-segments are free, not joined into a tube, and have prominent yellow glands at the bases. The following few species provide a microcosm not only of this diverse genus but of the diversity of the S. African flora. They illustrate what we have tried to explain above. Read on, note the habitats & the growing seasons. Now you know all about it.

**GLADIOLUS**: the summer-growers like it high but not always so dry. This is an important genus of corms, in the Iridaceae, with about 150 species distributed south through E. Africa to South Africa, where the majority, over 100, grow. As is the case with so many S. African genera, the greatest number & diversity of these is in the winter rainfall area of the Cape. Most of the Cape winter-growers are best grown in frost-free, well-ventilated conditions in the UK but we already have a few of borderline hardiness, such as *G. cardinalis* & *G. tristis*. We believe there will be several dwarfer winter-growers from high altitudes well-suited to cultivation in the same conditions as most of the Eurasian 'bulbs'. *G. watermeyeri*, from the high plateaus around Nieuwoudtville, was untouched by severe frosts in our bulb-house. These are for us to consider in the future. For the moment we concentrate on the summer-growers, a smaller group but still diverse, distributed from sea-level upwards in the E. Cape & Natal north into the Transvaal, reaching 3000m in the Drakensberg, where there are about a dozen species above 1800m. The only one of these established in British gardens is a form of *G. papilio*, a plant of marshy areas up to 2400m, which is no trouble in UK gardens, as long as it is not too hot & dry in summer. Most of the following summer-growers should prove just as hardy but the grassland & saxatile species may be resentful of winter wetness. It will be a matter of trial & initially the best way to treat some may be to grow the seedlings in pots, either plunged outside or in any open-frame for the summer,
Second only to a German visitor who ended up in intensive care. After two operations and ten days in hospital, Jim has achieved a nose-bleed status in local ENT unit history.

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when they will enjoy plenty of moisture, & to cover them or store the pots dry in winter, when they are dormant & will need no moisture at all. Several will prove good, reliable plants for British gardens. Nomenclature follows the 1972 monograph, ‘A Revision of the South African Species of Gladiolus’ by Lewis & Obermeyer but this is soon to be supplanted by a two volume monograph by Peter Goldblatt, which will certainly necessitate some changes of the names & population references here.

HESPERANTHA: flowers of the west go east into the rain. With about 60 species, all in southern Africa, this cormous genus of the Iridaceae follows the standard distributional pattern. Most of them grow in S. Africa itself. Of these, the larger number are winter-growers from the S.W. However, over a dozen ascend to high altitudes in the summer rainfall area. Our collections of these summer-growers will be temperature-hardy in the UK but the saxatile ones & any others from similarly well-drained habitats are unlikely to tolerate wet British winters when they are dormant. They will need to be kept dry under glass then, just like any other high-alpines. All summer-growers will be best outside in a British summer, kept well watered if the weather is hot & dry. Larger species from marshy habitats will probably be successfully grown outside throughout the year in the UK. This is a diverse genus with many lovely things in it, variable in height & form from crocus-like to gladiolus-like plants, usually with white or pink flowers, often more deeply coloured on the exterior. The summer-rainfall species have been well investigated recently by Hilliard & Burtt so there should be no trouble in supplying names as soon as we have some flowering material available.

ROMULEA: snow-melt winter-growers from the desert ranges. We cannot think of another really important genus of dwarf, winter-growing monocots still so neglected by northern hemisphere bulb-enthusiasts. In the Iridaceae & almost certainly derived from the same ancient ancestor as Crocus, this genus, like Erica, Gladiolus, Pelargonium & several others, has its centre of diversity in S. Africa with a secondary, much more limited centre in the Mediterranean area of the northern hemisphere. Though there a great variation in characters, the general pattern is of corms with crocus-like flowers, carried severally on stems of about 10-20cm, though some will extend to 30cm or so as they approach fruiting. Many of the montane ones will open their flowers at about 5cm. The assumption by bulb enthusiasts that S. African species are best grown under frost-free conditions is true for the low altitude species of the S.W. Cape. Until now, these have been almost the only ones we have had access to. There are, however, a great many mountain plants, distributed through the ranges spreading from Namaqualand in a great curve to the south & west, along the borders of the Northern Cape & of the Great Karoo, with many narrow endemics & an extraordinary explosion of species locally, particularly in the Nieuwoudtville area. Recently Rod & Rachel Saunders have been visiting these mountains when the plants are in flower & returning to collect seed. They have little doubt that their collections of the following, made at high altitudes, will be perfectly temperature-hardy in most of Europe & N.America: R. amoena, R. atrandra, R. monadelpha, R. monticola, R. syringaeoflora, R. tetragona & the races of R. tortuosa. Many more are likely to prove just as hardy as these but we remember we are dealing with winter-growers from a dry, continental climate. They will need a summer rest & possibly some care with watering during the growing season. Treat them precisely as you would the majority of such northern hemisphere genera, as Crocus, Fritillaria or Tulipa, with which they will fit in perfectly in the bulb-frame or alpine-house, where they can have good ventilation during their winter growing-season. The high altitude monocots of these desert ranges are an untapped source for the northern hemisphere bulb-enthusiast. In this list you will find high collections of Androcymbium, Massonia & Daubenya spp. We hope we can persuade Rachel & Rod Saunders to collect more. Give them a trial; you will find these romuleas the most spectacular dwarf "bulbs. The very few, summer rainfall Romulea spp., all from high in the Drakensberg (R. macowanii, etc.) are totally hardy & satisfactory outside in the UK but, if you want to be perverse, these would probably forgive you for treating them like the vast, winter-growing majority. Names follow the 1972 monograph by M.P. De Vos.

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 1997

COVER UP PLANS FOILED

Circumstances combined to prevent us from completing the erection of the large polythene tunnel (hoop-house to Transatlantic readers), which we had planned to have up and covered before the start of the 1996-97 winter. Those who have followed our activities in the past will be aware that we never quite realise our plans and are always rushing to catch up. We may get older but we do not seem to get any wiser. Our intention had been to undertake this work as soon as our last list was mailed to you, but within days of this happening Jim was in hospital. A bleeding nose may seem trivial but, confronted with such an entirely novel experience, he tried to endow the event with a certain degree of panache. Jim has achieved a nose-bleed status in local ENT unit history second only to a German visitor who ended up in intensive care. After two operations and ten days in hospital,
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five of those with nose and throat plugged, sustained by blood transfusions & saline drips, he emerged unleaking but not in a state to erect polythene tunnels. As no reason for the incident has been found and the septoplasty is settling down, life proceeds as before, though there is a certain feeling of relief that it did not happen on top of a mountain in South America. Still, lots of things can happen anywhere and we cannot take every possibility into account in running our lives. We inflict this saga on you not only to explain why it took even longer than usual for us to send your order from the last list but also to dispel rumours that Jim was set upon by a dandelion-expert and beaten about the nose with a bunch of Taraxacum officinale.

The tunnel is still not completed, though the hoops are now up and ready. Perhaps 1997 will see us achieving what we failed to achieve in 1996. As you may have gathered from the development of our lists, we appear to be entering into a period of consolidation. It is now over 13 years since we started to devote most of our time to collecting and distributing seeds. While we have no intention of turning solely to growing plants and you can be assured that seeds are our primary concern, we can bring you a far greater range of interesting material on a regular basis by producing a proportion of this seed ourselves. Wherever possible, we are establishing parent-stocks of different clones, raised from wild-collected seed with field-data - preferably from our own collections. As we have few pollinators here, hand-pollination is usually essential for good seed-sets, so we can be as sure as we can with cultivated seed that this will represent a microcosm of the original wild population.

The new tunnel will give us about 200sq.m (2000sq.ft) of growing area. With netting-sides, we shall have only protection from rain but this is all we need in our climate. A slightly more protected environment with slightly higher summer temperatures and ensured dry conditions overhead should enable us to produce seed on many of the larger species, which may be unreliable in the open garden. Coupled with our existing glasshouse for 'bulbs', which we shall be able to utilise solely for the smaller, choicer species, we shall have as much as we can hope to keep under control. Chaos exists in an interim state at present but we hope to start to nudge everything into place in 1997.

With our home-produced seeds as a basis for our lists, supplemented with wild-collected material from a variety of areas and sources, we hope that we can continue to expand and develop the range of material available to you. From 1997 on, we plan to set these lists into a more predictable pattern with one, mainly concerned with 'bulbs' and other species which germinate at low temperatures, being issued each July and another, including most alpine-plants, larger herbaceous perennials and other summer-growers, issued each December/January.

Whether this can be achieved remains to be seen but, if it does work out, we shall require the tolerance and patience of our customers so that the time available for collecting wild material does not become more and more eroded. While the days of our spending five or six months abroad collecting, as we did in the early 1980's, are over, we shall be able to offer you a much greater range of high quality seeds than at any time in the past.

FROM OUR CELEBRITY CORRESPONDENT IN JAPAN

Don Elick, co-author, with Yorkshire artist Raymond Booth, of 'Japonica Magnifica', surely the most beautiful and authoritative book on Japanese flowers ever published, has been 'discovered' by his adopted country. He writes "I am now on the lecture list - every fancy, oversized, full-color magazine in the country clammers for interviews - their camera-men tramp through the garden - even a couple of nation-wide newspapers want to run a front-page Sunday Supplement next spring - tourist busses disgorge loads of 'plants people' - the telephone rings every time I get sat down - on and on. I have simply got to get things under control but the Japanese have a way of overdoing everything. With luck the Elick boom will quickly die out. On the good side, various kindly people have disclosed secret colonies of raving rarities that I would never have unearthed on my own.

POOR PUSSIES RIPPED-OFF BY YOURKSHIRE WATER FAT CATS

We never cease to delight in the utter complexity of the world. While we do not subscribe to a theory of chaos (a butterfly flaps its wings in the Amazonian rain-forest...) it may be that if a water company schemes to increase its profits by an infinitesimally small amount of money, a stray cat goes without its supper. Or, if we collect a few seeds on that South American mountain ..... ? Yorkshire Water customer Jo Hanslip of Sheffield tells us : "I have just finished composting the remains of too many favourite plants. Long hours at work over the last couple of years, combined with Yorkshire Water as the water supplier and a second dreadfully hot and dry summer have taken their toll, particularly of anything normally kept in a pot. Sadly, I have not been able to keep up with stocking the plant table that I do for the Cat Protection League, having no surplus seedlings to offer. I go to what you might term an up-market jumble sale in one of the Civic Buildings in Shipley and, whilst many of my offerings are of the more commonly available kind, you might be pleased to know that your plants have a devoted following there amongst a wide range of people. Many are pensioners, others are unable to get to garden-centres, and all are a tremendous mix from different ethnic groups. All of them are intensely interested in learning as much as possible about the plant, want to know exactly what care they need, in what environment
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they should be planted and any other advice. There is a regular flow of comments from people about how well their purchases are doing and how pleased they are with them. Some now say that they buy their plants nowhere else because nowhere else has the same range of the unusual and the little known. So, as well as providing some support for indigent felines, I think you would be surprised (and I hope pleased) at the interest that is created amongst a lot of people who otherwise have no chance of growing more unusual plants.”

NEWS FROM JIM & JENNY ARCHIBALD  AUGUST 1997

WHO CARES?
Recently Ron McBeath commented to us that no-one will be replacing him as Assistant Curator at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. He remarked that when he joined the staff there, there were five Assistant Curators. Now this has been reduced to two. The competence & experience of John Main, the Curator himself, whom we have known at least as long as Ron, is not in doubt but we cannot see how it can be possible to maintain the same standard with three people instead of six. Some of us regard one of the main functions of a botanic garden as growing some sort of annotated collection of living plants and feel that each one should be striving towards excellence in its own field, no matter how limited the parameters. The person in charge of such a collection and responsible for its maintenance must be a curator, literally the "person who cares". Current thinking among some administrators is that this concept is totally out of date. Such collections are seen as an undesirable reminder of a trophy-hunting, imperial past. We suspect that this thinking is largely driven by expediency and finance. Competent curation of a collection is low profile and expensive. The two best-known British botanic gardens, Edinburgh and Kew, now have to rely increasingly on raising their own financial resources. Once funded wholly by the tax-payer, they are now independent, privatised "charities", albeit ones which are supported by a substantial, even if annually decreasing, government hand-out. Continually raising money means maintaining the glossy, media-friendly image, essential in a world where there is so much competition for the attention of those with open cheque-books. How much the administration actually cares about either the plants or the gardens comes far down a list of priorities headed by its ability to raise money. We note that the incipient Kew clone, the National Botanic Garden of Wales, has a director of horticulture rather than a curator. We assume no-one is expected to care anymore.

DE MORTUIS
"1996 - a good year for deaths" remarked Will McLewin the other day. One who departed suddenly was John Kelly, a close friend of ours in the days before he turned himself into a bland media-person and popular gardening journalist. It was with some pleasure we read his posthumous article on peat in the June, 1997, AGS Bulletin. The tidy polemic was a fitting obituary and recalled his earlier acerbic & perceptive personality. "Ill-informed putative environmentalists" who are "inaccurate by 18,870%". That's our old John.

THANK YOU FOR FLYING  PI-PC-K
As his flight took off for South Africa last year, Jim opened his British newspaper to find an account of "the first piece of industrial action at Kew since the gardens were established more than two centuries ago." Whatever else the post-imperial, politically correct administration at Kew may be remembered for, it was at least an unique and historic achievement to have brought about the first strike in 200 years. The regional union organiser said staff were apparently concerned about performance related pay. "How are they going to measure performance? The number of weeds they pull up? Or perhaps the growth of plants for which my members are responsible. I have had more intelligent conversations with plants than with Kew management."
While some of us far removed from Kew suspected the administration might have taken-off into orbit, it is apparent some of the staff thought so as well. A year or so ago, one employee, still striving to maintain some of the currently unfashionable curatorial standards commented to us that "'They' all think I'm mad, here, you know." Time will tell.

KNIGHTS OF THE GARDEN
As some of you may have noted in the past, our all too infrequent correspondence with Don Elick, is always good for a quote. This spring Don commented that "It was a delight to read through all the home-grown seeds that you are able to offer. Surely this is what professional seed collecting is all about. Your accomplishment is magnificent. You should be knighted." Now, Don, it is a kind thought but we have to tell you that Americans living in Japan do not cut much ice with those who hand out knighthoods in this country. You must also appreciate that our activities, while they may seem "a magnificent accomplishment" to you, are regarded as an undesirable anachronism, involving ripping-off
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the natural inheritance of indigenous peoples, by some now in the botanical establishment. We might add that they would probably have quite a low opinion of someone like yourself or indeed of most of you who may read this, dismissing you all as 'stamp-collectors', 'train-spotters' or 'anoraks' (though we doubt if those in such positions would know or use all or any of these epithets, even if they are in the latest Oxford English Dictionary). Apart from all that, you can hardly expect us to have any chance of being offered a knighthood, or anything else in British horticulture, if we make a habit of commenting on the activities of the hypersensitive horto-botanical establishment here. A few remarks about the policy of the Alpine Garden Society management and someone writes "Goodbye to your *Lyttel (or was it little?) Trophy." Mention the Royal Horticultural Society and someone else says "Oops, there goes your V.M.H.!", They are right. You have to cultivate more than plants if you aspire to such baubles. We are already labelled "iconoclasts" and "eccentrics" and, heaven knows, there are fewer of those around nowadays in Britain than there are knights.

*Jim was awarded the Lyttel Trophy in 2003

NEWSLETTER MARCH 1998

DRAKE'S SUNSET

We have acquired a reputation for writing the introduction to our lists in a style, recently reviled by the British Prime Minister, as he attempted to whip up public enthusiasm for a multi-million pound, Disneysque dome. "Cynics have rubbish the idea" apparently (shocking!) but they are only a part of "an ignoble, unpatriotic and nihilistic tradition", "an inglorious strand of British history." It is, on the whole, a "strand of British history" that some of us are proud to continue to try to spin, even if only in something apparently so trivial in the scheme of things as horticulture. But it is impossible to be seriously negative without having a concept of the positive, no matter how idealistic that may be. You cannot have villains without having heroes. Heroes must be few. They need not be perfect but they must stand above a mass of self-serving mediocrity.

Of course we have heroes in the field of collecting. E.K. Balls, Peter Davis, Rupert Barneby .... and in horticulture? One of our gardening heroes died last winter.

"After the war, he went to Scotland and grew alpine plants"

Jack Drake was the first serious influence on Jim's work with plants. In the early 1960s, springs and summers were spent away from university in Edinburgh, working at Jack Drake's Inshriach Nursery in the Scottish Highlands. Collecting seed from the vast range of plants growing there for the Inshriach seed-list was a summer activity. Memories of Jack in those days continue to be a delight. His likes and dislikes among plants were clear-cut. He very much regretted that he could not grow some of his favourites at Inshriach. No kniphofias (pronounced 'correctly' with the K and P sounded) and no aubrieta (pronounced as most of us do). Always with a hint of hypochondria, he consumed 'Yeastvite' (does it still exist?) regularly - "marvellous thing". He was devoted to Danny Kaye, "a very funny man", and dashed off to Inverness to see his latest films. Perhaps if Jim had ended up going to work with him full time, Jack Drake might not have remained a hero. It is best to preserve a little distance between reality and ideals. His funeral service in Somerset was the shortest we have ever attended. Jack would have appreciated it. "Now that's what I call a funeral service. He went through that like a dose of salts." A couple of appropriately rousing hymns led by an extrovert vicar, who sang at the top of his voice, and the shortest possible residue of Jack's life. "After the war, he went back to Scotland and grew alpine plants."

Fifty years. Just like that.

"..make mine a double prawn cocktail"

When Jack went south to live in Somerset, we saw him several times each year. He still grew plants enthusiastically and sifted the best Lewisias from his 'Sunset Strain' until his last year. We now grow the last of his selected seedlings here. We almost always went out for a pub lunch with him and another old friend, Helen Barton. If that prerequisite of 1960's cuisine, prawn cocktail, was on the menu, Jack would order it. The last time we went to the bar of the hotel in Crewkeme, Jack proclaimed that he would not have a main course, "Just a double prawn cocktail." After the cremation, we could not find a single person we knew from the plant world among the throng of Jack's extensive extended family, so we just went back to Wales. It was early evening as we turned homeward from Bristol. We drove into the west, chasing the most brilliant sunset either of us can remember towards the Atlantic for mile after mile. We had almost reached Swansea when the last glow faded. The particulates from Jack's incineration performed brilliantly. Every shade from his Lewisias was there. Oranges. Yellows. Pinks. For a moment we caught a hint of the distinctive shade of prawn cocktail.
THE BELLS! THE BELLS!
"Who cares, indeed!!" writes Roger Warner, curator of the Camellia Mountain Botanic Garden at St. Helena, California, in response to our comments on the smothering of curatorial skills by the British horto-botanical establishment. "The botanical gardens of California are limping along. The vegetable world has no sex appeal. If you can’t eat it or make medicine out of it or saw it into lumber, it has no value; thus the rise of the botanical monastic movement. Every Sunday morning, we play a tape-recording over loudspeakers of Quasimodo, the bell-ringer, ringing his chimes and screaming 'SANCTUARY!' We are collecting the hardy evergreen Magnoliaceae of China. We try to get them before they are turned into chairs or chopsticks and then redistribute propagating material. Sadly our existing botanical gardens are so underfunded or run by morons that we have difficulty getting anyone to accept our offers; thus we despair and turn up the volume on the loudspeakers ... I find that seed pans of rarities help to dispel the gloom."

HELLEBORUS THIBETANUS AND OTHER HOLY GRAILS
Following a recent trip to China to cement relations, Will McLewin has arranged for an importation of a substantial number of cultivated *Helleborus thibetanus* divisions. These are even, field-grown, flowering size plants. In fact the ones we have here are in flower now, in shades of pale pink to very pale pink (more or less white). As we note this is advertised in a current RHS publication, 'The Garden', at a rather high price, some of you may wish to know that Will has these for sale at a basic retail price of £12 each (including postage & packing for UK customers), falling to £6 or even £3, if you wish to buy by the 100 or can use smaller divisions to grow on in bulk. Inquiries for these and for a range of Chinese tree-peonies (including cultivars approximating to that other holy grail, *Paonia rockii*) from a specialist Gansu nursery to Will McLewin. We hope to have seed available later in 1998. In accordance with our usual line of thought, we feel seed will give the best chance of establishing this disjunct species and learning of its requirements in western gardens.

NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 1998

THE NEED TO KNOW
The present international obsession with the activities of William Jefferson Clinton has led to a healthy discussion over what and how much anyone needs to know. The 'Washington Post' states that "it is the public, not Congress, that now needs to reach a judgment as to the President's conduct." It is certainly valid to argue that whatever happens in the Oval Office of the White House is the concern of the American people and that they need to know. Is it the concern, however, of any other nation? A discussion of this question would be pointless. We live in a time when the rapid transmission of facts and gossip around the world means that we are continually confronted with an excess of information, most of which we have no need to know at all. Nevertheless, the decision as to whether or not anyone of us needs a particular piece of information should be a personal one.

......integrity and complete honesty are prerequisite in scientific publication......
When others take that decision out of our hands and withhold information on any subject which may affect us, it must be for a very good reason. We are prepared to consider numerous contentions regarding national interests and security or commercial confidences but never the simple statement that "there is no need for them to know." Whatever the arguments may be regarding government and international politics there is one field of human activity where integrity and complete honesty are prerequisite. That is scientific publication. Over the last few years, several new species relevant to many of you have been described but information regarding the type-locality has been withheld. The reason is claimed to be that, if it is revealed, 'someone will dig everything up'. Your reaction may well be "Quite right! We don't need to know that." No matter how emotive this explanation may be, it is spurious. Would you accept any scientific account in the fields of chemistry or physics where only the conclusion of experimental work was published and not the method? This is sloppy stuff and should never have been accepted by any editor, who exercises a modicum of scientific rigour in assessing material for publication. If it is actually now the editorial policy of some publications to conceal this most necessary of facts, that is truly distressing. While 'The New Plantman' or 'Herbertia' might rank, in scientific terms, alongside the 'Proceedings of the Botanical Society of Baluchistan', they are important to all of us, as they are widely read by informed gardeners, the main users of these names. Many of these gardeners have backgrounds where exercising a considerable amount of intellectual rigour in their own fields has been part of their daily lives for decades. Most would accept that the current procedure for sticking names on plants is hardly a scientific activity, in spite of its
pretensions. The methodology may be silly but they all go along with it because it is necessary and, moreover, it gives an infinite opportunity for stimulating argument and discussion.

..... “the antidote to cynicism and suspicion is fresh air and sunlight” ....

Last century, it was people with a training in medicine or the law, who named plants. Today there are ‘amateurs’ with a much greater knowledge of certain groups of plants than any ‘professionals’ have ever had. It is a knowledge of plants in their natural habitats that is the forte of today’s ‘amateurs’. The validity of a newly described species can only be assessed by reviewing the entire population in nature in the stated type locality. To publish a new species in these informed times and fail to provide an exact type-locality is deplorable.
The 'Washington Times' argues for making the Starr report available to the public in full: "the antidote to cynicism and suspicion is fresh air and sunlight.... the public needs to have the evidence before them so that they can hold lawmakers accountable."

A CHINESE TAKEAWAY IN STOCKPORT
When Will Mclewin returned from his collecting-trip to S.E. Europe, there was hardly any seed left on his Helleborus thibetanus. Just little nests of empty capsules neatly stacked between the containers. "The ultimate Chinese takeaway," said Will. We think he really did mean ultimate for the well-fed Mancunian mice.

A CHINESE TAKEOVER IN VANCOUVER
No. We have no opinions about the increase in property prices in Vancouver, allegedly due to an influx of wealthy Chinese. We only comment on gardening. When Jim was at a conference there in March, he was taken to the vast wholesale nursery of Piroc Plants Inc. at Pitt Meadows. This specialises in importing and marketing nursery stock from China. His enthusiastic and gracious guide was Yuekun Chen, an employee of a Chinese botanic garden spending a couple of years in Canada to learn all about commercial horticulture in North America. Jim commented that one of our customers, Robert Newman is spending a few years working as curator at the Nanjing Institute of Botany. Yuekun Chen was both amused and bemused. In a recent letter Robert writes, "It is staggering and astonishing to me how little most of the people working in botanic gardens here care about their work!! Yuekun Chen's enthusiasm had certainly been stimulated by associating his work with dollars, both Canadian and US. Whether this will benefit Chinese plants or botanical science in his country is another matter.

NEWSLETTER  DECEMBER 1999

VIEWPOINT ? READ THE FACTS THE RHS REFUSED TO PUBLISH
In the September 1999 issue of 'The Garden', Christopher Grey-Wilson criticised British gardeners who import plants from China. He alleged that the plants are all collected in the wild and that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) is being flouted. Do we really need to examine our consciences as he suggests?

Jim asked if he thinks we gardeners are all DEPRAVED AND CORRUPTED?
"Can I interest you in a tasteful piece of horticultural pornography?" said the sales assistant on the bookstall at an American conference I attended recently. Rifling through the pages of Gisela Schliemann's homage to Helen Ballard's hellebores, I could see how easily the interest of the neophyte might be stimulated by the large format, seductively lit studio photographs but to me this was 'Penthouse' stuff. "Have you got any old 'Kew Magazine Monographs' ?", I asked in a low voice. A copy of 'The Genus Cypripedium' was pulled out from under the counter: a whole volume dedicated to the slipper of Venus herself; exquisitely illustrated in tantalising detail by the most skilled practitioners of botanical art. For those who wish to explore the outer reaches and the forbidden zones of esoteric, intellectual horto-erotica nothing equals the 'Kew Magazine Monographs' during the period they were edited by Christopher Grey-Wilson: not only 'The Genus Cypripedium' (all in CITES Appendix II) but 'The Genus Lewisia' (several in CITES Appendix II), 'The Genus Echinocactus' (all in CITES Appendix II), 'The Genus Pleione' (all in CITES Appendix II) and, of course, his own 'The Genus Cyclamen' (Several in CITES Appendix I and the rest in Appendix II).
Not only has Chris been responsible for the production of these classics of controlled horticulture but he writes prolifically about all manner of proscribed Oriental delights, travelling internationally to tell of his personal encounters in the Far East and showing superlative photographs of his Chinese experiences. Now that we are all in a frenzy of desire to share just a little of these with him, he castigates us mercilessly. It is
“scandalous”, “wild and blatant.” It is all our fault. We are humiliated. With cruel and consummate skill he has built up our expectations to cast them down, manipulating our British penchant for wallowing in remorse. An orgy of guilt—ridden censoriousness, finger-pointing, banning and stamping out may follow.

With the increasing pressure to be self-supporting squeezing the finances of formerly government-funded institutions, I certainly should not criticise the management at Kew. Why not exploit the talents of employees to profit from the horticultural appeal of publications devoted to "rare and endangered species" with large and colourful reproductive parts? While these monographs are all extremely competent works of a high standard, it seems paradoxical that an organisation is involved in advertising the attractions of commodities, whose supply it is in the business of restricting. Cynical subscribers to more abstruse and improbable conspiracy theories might wonder at this overwhelming emphasis on accounts of genera included under CITES, a piece of legislation for which Kew has been largely responsible and acts as consultants to Customs and Excise, the Department of the Environment and the European Union. They might wonder even more when there is a Kew Magazine Monograph anticipated on the genus Arisaema and Chris Grey-Wilson advocates that this genus should be listed under CITES without delay. Are we being manipulated? Surely not. After all, this is Britain not China.

Over the past two decades botanical institutes in S.W. China, notably at Kunming and Chengdu, have evolved an extensive operation serving the demands of foreigners clamouring to collect seeds and plants from Yunnan and Sichuan. Readers of British gardening publications may have the impression that this has been some sort of exclusive privilege of the British. Individuals and groups from other western European countries, North America, Australasia, S.E. Asia and Japan have poured in, often flying in and out from Bangkok and avoiding any problems with the authorities at Beijing when they exit. The "special dispensation" for foreigners to collect plants, which Chris mentions, seems to have been quite freely available for some time, in Yunnan at least. In my experience, "special dispensations" in any country depend on either who you are and who you know or what you will pay. The cost of the Chinese package the last time I was asked if I should like to join such a group was $100 per person per day, a realistic sum by rich western standards but, considering the average income in China, one which could be multiplied by at least ten in comparative terms. The British Alpine Garden Society Expedition, in which Chris Grey-Wilson participated, alone involved almost 500 man-days in the field. $50,000 is a substantial amount of money in this country but a fortune in Yunnan. Moreover, there was at least one other British group being simultaneously packaged by Kunming. Chris and his fellow-travellers have not only made Chinese botanists aware how much money foreigners will pay to see and collect the local plants but also precisely which groups of plants are of most interest to them. The Beijing end of this new marketing operation is fronted by the daughter of one of the leading Chinese botanical academics and its lists notably concentrate on such fashionable genera as Fritillaria, Lilium, Corydalis, Arisaema and Cypripedium. Interestingly, during the last year or so, as the export of south-west Chinese plants by way of Beijing has become more significant, "special dispensations" for foreigners to collect and export plant material through Yunnan do not appear to have been forthcoming. Cutting-out middle-men is a standard business practice.

Though it meets with the disapproval of Chris Grey-Wilson, we should not assume that this new export business is not viewed favourably by the present Chinese government. In a recent article on the restoration of the walled garden in the Forbidden City, Lorien Holland writes that "Peking's new leadership, on the lookout for ways of increasing foreign investment, recently dedicated its first world exposition to horticulture. As China has more native flowering plants than Europe and North America combined, Peking is looking to draw in world expertise in bio-technology, medical research and flower production." Historically, gardening has been part of Chinese culture for far longer than in the West. Most of the introductions to Europe, made by that early employee of the Royal Horticultural Society, Robert Fortune, were of plants obtained from Chinese nurseries and gardens in the 1840s. The horticultural industry continues to be extensive. Last year I visited a vast nursery in Vancouver, acting as a clearing-house for container-grown, woody plants imported from China and marketed throughout the West Coast of North America. I was shown around by an enthusiastic, young Chinese botanist, an employee of the Nanjing Botanical Institute working there. I see no grounds for Chris Grey-Wilson's assumption that all plants coming out of China have been "stripped from the wild." On the contrary, I should say that the plants of Helleborus thibetanus and the bulbs of Fritillaria and Lilium, which I have seen, have been cultivated stock. The uses of such plants for either medicinal or culinary purposes are a long-standing feature of Chinese culture. Chris himself remarked elsewhere that the scarcity of a lily in the wild "may be accounted for by the fact that the Chinese like to eat lily bulbs".

There is at present a very extensive, legitimate international business in marketing thousands of ancient, wild-collected tree-ferns (Dicksonia antarctica), mainly from Tasmania. All Dicksoniaceae are covered by CITES Appendix II but no one complains because these are marketed as having been "rescued from the vast areas of Australia being bulldozed". The Chinese would seem to have entered the world of global capitalism with a naive enthusiasm. They have failed to understand that image is now everything in the West. Window-dressing was
needed for their operation. Perhaps they should have increased the price of their plants to pay for a licencing bureaucracy to generate official pieces of paper stamped with 'Certified nursery-grown by the People's Republic of China' or 'Harvested from managed populations' as appropriate. A good public relations firm could then have ensured that they were flying high on angels' wings along with 'The Bodyshop': 'Gathered from sustainable natural sources by the indigenous peoples of Yunnan' and 'A percentage from the sale of this plant will assist in establishing rural clinics in Sichuan' with publicity featuring a picture of a fetching child in traditional costume or, for the British market, a baby panda: 'A percentage from the sale of this plant will ensure his future.'

What is to be done by British gardeners about all this now? I should say absolutely nothing. As far as the importation is concerned, this is solely the concern of British Customs and Excise. In spite of the fact that Chris appears to consider them incompetent, "unwary" and easily fooled, I have always found them to be a courteous and efficient authority to deal with. His statement that "possession of CITES-restricted plants without a valid certificate is unlawful" is, quite simply, wholly untrue.

At present, no-one need fear having their door kicked in at 3 a.m. because they have an uncertified cyclamen in the garden or cactus on the window-sill, no matter how much Chris may relish the thought of a society where such things happen. Anyone importing anything, of course, should ensure that the paperwork is in order. Among all the Chinese genera which Chris mentions only those in Orchidaceae are covered by CITES. In spite of the impression he gives, it is perfectly legal to import both wild-collected and cultivated Chinese orchids with the appropriate documentation and to import all the other genera he mentions without any documentation at all, other than a Chinese phytosanitary certificate and accompanying invoice.

As far as these plants are concerned, Chris has made his own views clear and it is now up to moderately well-informed adult individuals to reach their own decisions. If you feel very strongly about the possibility that some of this material may have been collected from wild populations, you can quite simply desist from buying any plant which is native to China. So, if you want to be really sure "just say no "to everything which might be Chinese.

As far as these exports are concerned, I should say that it is solely the business of the Chinese government how it manages any sustainable natural resource which occurs within the confines of its country. Of course, we can all express opinions tactfully and give advice, if it is asked for, but we should only have ourselves to blame if the Chinese say of us in 1999 what Robert Fortune said of them in 1865: "From the highest Mandarin down to the meanest beggar they are filled with the most conceited notions of their own importance."

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2000

WET WEEKEND ON THE WAIMAKARIRI
We should not have had any plans to collect seeds in New Zealand had it not been for the fact that daughter Julia Jane, having married a New Zealander, is now resident in Auckland and has produced a son. Family visiting, baby-viewing and a touch of tourism really meant that we had a holiday. Although the general perception is that our lives are one long holiday, the fact is that we do not seem to be very good at having holidays. Perhaps 'doing something different' or 'not doing anything' is what a holiday is.

We were on the main tourist route from Christchurch to the West Coast, heading up to Arthur's Pass. It was just into Saturday afternoon in Sheffield when our nearside tyre blew and shredded. Incredibly, this happened outside the local service station and we pulled on to the forecourt to put on the spare. There was no chance of replacing the tyre in Sheffield, however, as it "was all locked up till Monday morning. "They may be open in Springfield," we were told. They were but only for fuel. "The boys have gone into Christchurch for the weekend," said the pump attendant. We managed to check the tyre-pressures before the air-hose blew another hole and was repaired 'live' for the twentieth time with a large roll of sticky tape. "I'm always getting on to them to fix that," she said. "You won't find anybody who can do a tyre for you at the weekend in Darfield but if you go back to Christchurch you might." No way were we going all the way back to Christchurch, so we decided to loop round by Mt. Hutt and aim to be in Timaru by Sunday night. Then miraculously just after turning off the main road we found a garage open, able and willing to replace our tyre. "Your colleagues on the main road don't seem too keen on making a few dollars from us tourists," we said to the owner. "I'm Dutch," he said.

It was too late for Mt. Hutt on Saturday. On Sunday morning Mt. Hutt had disappeared into the low cloud. We headed back towards the West Coast, past the trio of local police cars, fresh from investigating the murder in Darfield the previous week and parked up by the river, as their occupants unpacked their fishing-rods. Rain was drizzling as we pottered about on Porter's Pass. It was pouring down on Arthur's Pass. We retired to the hotel back down the road and from a dry refuge looked out on curtains of rain drifting over the Waimakariri river. We had astutely noted on the way up that the hotel proclaimed on a notice outside that it was 'Open on Sundays'.

FROM PAUCITY TO PLENTY
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

A customer wrote to us recently commenting that he was suffering from withdrawal symptoms as he had not received a list from us since December, 1999. As most of you will be aware, the irregularity in the appearance of our lists reflects the irregularity of our lifestyle. When we returned from New Zealand, we found ourselves fully occupied with the plants growing here in Wales. Hand-pollinating plants in flower then collecting and cleaning the seeds, to say nothing of garden maintenance, have kept us fully occupied. There is no point in having a surfeit of exciting material to offer to you if we do not send the lists out, so we fear that you will suffer from an excess of lists over the next six months. Taking first things first, we are basing the present list on southern hemisphere material. Apart from our own few 2000 New Zealand collections, a lot of interesting seed has come in from other collectors in South America and South Africa, gathered during the early part of 2000. It also seemed appropriate to include 2000 collections of genera such Helleborus, Trillium, Anemone and so on here, so that we can try to get this seed to you as soon as we can after collection. We are currently working with 2000 seed from all the winter-growing 'bulbs', which will in our next list, along with our early summer collections from N.W. Iran. We hope to send this in early October. After that, there are North American species to be dealt with but that is enough for the present.

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2000

IRAN 2000: NO COCA COLA AND NO MACDONALD'S BUT STRAWBERRY JAM FOR EVERYONE?

Jim remembers a conversation with Paul Furse, many years ago, about the pleasures and problems of travelling in Iran. In the 1960's, it was the fashion for plant-collectors to drive out from Britain in their own Land Rovers, in which they slept and worked for the duration of the trip. It was essentially self-contained and rather insular travelling. Everyone took much of the food they would consume along with them. "Was there anything from home you really missed? Did you ever get a great, insatiable desire for anything?" asked Paul. Jim replied that a good quality bar of chocolate would not have been unappreciated from time to time. "With us it was strawberry jam," said Paul. "We dreamed about pots of home-made strawberry jam." Nowadays, you can obtain strawberry jam in Iran. It comes in individual portions, in those miniature plastic containers with peel-back foil tops, just like in Britain. Perhaps not quite what Paul Furse saw in his dreams.

It has been a long time since Jim spent a whole collecting season in Iran. Thirty-four years to be precise. The world has moved on frenetically and, contrary to western perceptions, Iran has, in its own ways, moved on as well.

At the start of the 21" Century, you can drive around Iran on modern, surfaced roads and stay in tolerable accommodation. Perhaps not always accommodation, which would meet the more demanding western standards but at least as acceptable as that to be found in eastern Turkey. The plant-hunter can accomplish in a few weeks what would have taken months decades ago.

In 2000, Jim made a flying-visit to the north-west corner of this vast country, as a back-seat passenger on a trip shared with our friends Norman Stevens and Bob Wallis. We focussed on collecting 'bulb' seed and some of the fruits of the journey are available in this present list. The visit also enabled us to initiate breeding-stocks of some of the Oncocyclus irises, which we hope will yield cultivated seed in the future. If the present official attitude towards western visitors continues, we shall certainly return.

The Iranian people themselves have not changed. They are as courteous, delightful and hospitable as ever. "We are a very friendly people. We want to be friends with the world. Why do you call us terrorists?" In this age of the internet and satellite television, many are well-informed about world affairs. There may be no CNN, no Coca Cola and no McDonald's but there is BBC World News and 'Inspector Morse'. The latter so expertly dubbed in Farsi that you could be convinced that John Thaw was, in fact, Iranian & might encounter some difficulty if he wished to visit the USA.

IT’S A HARD WORLD being a plant (hunter).

During 2000 we have visited:

New Zealand
  "I have to tell you that this has been the worst season for flowers and seed since I started looking at them over twenty years ago" (Joe Cartman)

Iran
  "This is the second year of the worst drought in Iran for thirty years." (Newspaper report)

Western USA
  "forest-fires rage throughout the west during an exceptional dry season" (Newspaper report)
A GATEWAY TO PARADISE
It is over twelve years since we moved to west Wales. That is quite long enough to make a garden, if you have nothing else to do. Most of us do have other things to do. In our case, we have been travelling for a significant period during those years and when we are at home we spend much of our time in the office. When we are involved with plants, it is most often a very practical association. We have concentrated on establishing stocks from wild seeds, collected both by ourselves and others. Providing suitable facilities for these plants and looking after them takes much of our time. At present, we spend over an hour every day hand-pollinating the bulbs in flower. One hour may not seem much but it adds up to about one normal working-day each week. Progress with what we could call self-indulgent gardening has been slow. It tends to come in frenetic spasms.

...a broken, rotting, wooden gate......
The first year we were here, fired by the enthusiasm that novelty inspires, we started to clear brambles along the long-neglected hedge which separates our field from our woodland. As we hacked away, we uncovered a broken, rotting, wooden gate, which had once secured a gap in the hedge. Cutting and sawing, we pushed the immense ball of scrub and brambles before us until it collapsed down the steep bank between the hedge and the stream to become the first of many bonfires. We were into the wood. That day we cleared and cut a simple path above the southern bank of the stream as far as the big beech tree. To the north beyond the stream was what might become a new world.

......beautifying the bog.......
It was a world we were not to enter for several years. Wet woodland may seem an attractive place to make a garden but there are degrees of wetness. Our woodland was very, very wet. Below the dominating tall alders, it was a wilderness of willows, which had fallen and rooted along their trunks; of seedling ashes and sycamores, keeled over and dying in the waterlogged soil; of lush, surface-rooting brambles and nettles. Water seeping into the valley-bottom ran over the surface for most of the year. It was not possible to walk on it without sinking to unknown depths. Progress through it involved jumping between fallen tree-trunks. It was a perilous place. A long, iron rod we used to measure the squelching depth could be thrust in up to 3m before it touched the boulder-clay. The bog lies in a great depression carved out by a river of melt-water flowing from the last retreating glacier to occupy our valley. Up until this year we called it 'the bog'. Our Welsh, farming neighbour, when we first moved to the area, referred to our activities there as 'beautifying the bog' and no doubt thought of them as a futile eccentricity, though he had the good manners never to say so.

At first we thought we could grow little more than kingcups, royal ferns and Lysichiton there but as time went on, we came to know 'the bog' better. Now the willows and weeds have gone; trees have been thinned to let more sunlight in; deep ditches have been dug by hand, some going right down to the boulder clay; the spoil has been mounded up between; paths have been made and surfaced. We may be only about half-way through the creation of this new ecosystem but last year we started to plant and to see the realization of our vision. Perhaps we shall never fully realize what might be achieved but we can always dream.

......sellers of dreams.......
We dream of a jungle of mature Rhododendron, Enkianthus, Eucryphia, Clethra, and Hydrangea villosa with an undergrowth of Primula, Meconopsis, Lilium, Trillium and Arisaema. We are sellers of dreams. We sell dreams to ourselves and hope to pay for their reality by work and knowledge.

We sell dreams to you. What are seeds but dreams in packets?

PICNIC IN IRAQ: pass between Daraki & Nowsud, 2500-2600m
Paul Furse had no problems driving to Marivan on the Iraqi border of Iranian Kordestan in 1962. By 1966, when we were there, insurgent Iraqi Kurds had just blown up a refinery in the oil-town of Kirkuk across the border. Iraqi government aeroplanes, bombing Kurdish villages, were not being too particular as to whether these were on Iraqi or Iranian territory. We tried to get out of Sanandaj on the Marivan road but were escorted back to the basement headquarters of SAVAK, the Shah’s secret police, to be questioned by urbane young men in suits who spoke perfect English. We did not find the Fritillaria straussii we had hoped for.

By 2000, there were no problems with SAVAK nor indeed their successors and we drove from Sanandaj to Marivan and back in a day on an excellent surfaced road. While we made several Fritillaria collections, there was still no F. straussii. Nor indeed was there any certainty we had collected F. crassifolia subsp. poluninii nor the
improbable *F. chlorantha* which Paul Furse claimed grew there. The fact that about half a dozen different *Fritillaria* species appear to occur within the area made it essential to have another look at it in 2001. This year we stayed in Marivan. It was a nostalgic visit for our Tehrani driver, Bahram, who, in his youth, had spent a week in jail there, while smuggling a car into Iran from Iraq. It is a vibrant town where shaggy-turbaned Kurds clad in baggy black ("We're really into boiler-suit country now," said Norman) jostle with slick young street-touts in trainers selling whisky miniatures (you can buy a litre of the real stuff for half the price it is in Britain).

After a memorably uncomfortable night in what could be called 'less than basic' accommodation', we set off south to attempt to reach Per Wendelbo's Iranian locality for *F. crassifolia* subsp. *poluninii*. Per visited this area during a more peaceful period when he was botanical adviser to the new Ariamehr Botanical Garden between 1974 & 1976.

Shortly after we left the main road, we hit the first check-point. Our passports were collected and after a long delay we were summoned to the officer in charge. "Tell him we only want to look for a little flower," I said. "No, no, no," said Bahram, "Don't mention flowers. I know these people. I'll tell him what he wants to hear." After much discussion our passports were returned. "He says we can go but don't walk too far from the road," We passed through subsequent check-points without trouble. "What did you say to the officer back there?" I asked. "I said you wanted to go for a picnic," said Bahram. "As he was in charge of security for the area, I read his name from some papers on his desk and told the other check-points that he had said that they had to let us through."

After the little village of Daraki the loose dirt-road climbs steeply to a pass. Beyond we could see it descend to the valley of the Sirvan river & wind down all the way to Nowshud. "This is the place. Pull in at the top," we shouted. Our 1962 British War Office map (useless for roads and place-names but still invaluable for contours) showed we were well above 7000ft (2134m) with a spot height near the top of the pass of 8654ft (2638m). It had to be the place. Well, if it is, we failed to find *F. crassifolia* subsp. *poluninii*. We traversed the north-facing slopes: plenty *Puschkinia* but no frits. We combed the ridgetops. We descended on the south-facing slopes. There were plenty bulbs: *Colchicum*, *Iris reticulata* and a *Fritillaria*, a 20cm high plant with several capsules on a stem, which we felt had to be something to do with *F. straussii* but had alternate leaves. We should have been elated at finding an unidentifiable *Fritillaria* but we were frustrated at not finding what we sought. Below us we could see another check-point and beyond to the west a track hair-pinned up an all but vertical cliff-face. Every so often a pick-up would climb or descend it. We returned to Bahram and drove down to the check-point. We could not take our vehicle up the track but the soldiers were helpful. We left it with them and started walking. "There's a teahouse where you can get a beer just over the top." they shouted. We thought they were joking. We soon got a lift in the back of a pick-up which, after much pausing to cool the engine, pulled in above some derelict buildings at the top. From there we could look down thousands of feet to the sun-scorched cultivation of a vast plain.

It was only then it dawned on us that we were in Iraq and we had been given a lift by a smuggler. "What are they running in and out?" I asked Bahram. "Alcohol and electronic parts for satellite receivers into Iran and food and medicines into Iraq," he said. "So much for the 'ethical foreign policy' of our government," I thought. We found no *Fritillaria* on the top of the mountain: only big funnels and masses of an *Ornithogalum* with the odd *Draba*, *Arabis* and *Lamium* in the rock crevices. We lurched back down at high speed, slew ing through the last snow-patches, in the back of another smuggler's pick-up. "Did you like Iraq?" called one of the soldiers. We smiled and waved and drove back towards Marivan. It was now dusk and the Check-points were unmanned.

**THE IRANIAN DROUGHT CONTINUES**

For the third year "the worst drought in Iran for thirty years" continues. Dry-climate florais are, however, resilient and have evolved to survive successive drier seasons. It does not mean there are no flowers and seeds just that their number and quality are poorer than during a more favourable period (such as must have existed during the 1960s). Even variations in spring weather between 2000 and 2001 resulted in different species being suited. This year was better for seed of the early flowering crocuses and irises and very poor for tulips & fringillaries. In 2000, we covered much of north-west Iran. In 2001 we visited the north-east, along the Turkmenistan border towards Afghanistan, as well as returning to some western localities. Between the two journeys, we have now collected much material that has been lost to cultivation over past decades. This may not be evident from our current lists, as it is seldom possible to collect sufficient seed to list from wild plants in poor seasons. Even in the more favourable 1960s and 1970s, it should be appreciated that very little was collected as seed. Most summer-dormant species were brought back as bulbs, corms, rhizomes and tubers. Seed collections recorded in field notes were often only single capsules. It is expecting the highly improbable, if not quite the impossible, to anticipate large wild seed-collections from most *Crocus* species. Be assured, however, that such species as *C. almeheinis* and *C. michelsonii* are now in our care. As are local endemics, like *Hycanthus transcaspicus* and *H. litwinowii*, which had set no seed at all in Iran this year. We have representatives of all the Iranian irises of the Oncocyclus Section in cultivation again. The first cultivated seed from one, *Iris urmiensis*, is in this list. More will follow from all such
plants as our parent-stocks become established. In the meantime, there should be plenty to stimulate the most demanding gardener among the following species.

NEWSLETTER  JANUARY 2002

Paradise lost? Paradise regained? Let's hear it for THE GARDENERS OF AFGHANISTAN

A few weeks after the atrocities of September, 2001, a customer wrote to us from the United States apologizing for the lateness of her order. She had just not been able to get her mind round sending it earlier and commented "if only more people were gardeners." So, let's hear it now for the gardeners of Afghanistan.

Paradise f.f. paradis f.L. fGk.  paradeisos f. Old Persian pairidaeza  park or enclosed garden.

1520  "Its verdure and flowers render it, in spring, a heaven."  The Emperor Babur on his city Kabul

1832  "The gardens are well-kept and laid out; the fruit trees are planted at regular distances. The ground was covered with the fallen blossom, which had drifted into the corners like so much snow. The Nawab and myself seated ourselves under a pear tree of Samarcand and admired the prospect. There were peaches, plums, apricots, pears, apples, quinces, cherries, walnuts, mulberries, pomegranates, and vines, all growing in one garden. There were also nightingales, blackbirds, thrushes and doves to raise their notes. "  Alexander Burnes in Kabul in 1832 (from 'Travels into Bokhara ')

1956  "... life was being lived happily; a party of ladies in reds and brilliant blues walked along the opposite bank, talking gaily to one another; poplars shimmered; willows bowed in the breeze; water flowed slowly in the irrigation ditches through a hundred gardens, among apricot trees with the fruit still heavy on them, submerging the butts of the mulberries, whose owners squatted in their properties and viewed the scene with satisfaction. Old white-bearded men sat proudly on stone walls with their grandchildren, grave-looking little boys with embroidered pill-box hats and little girls of extraordinary beauty. This evening was like some golden age of human happiness, attained sometimes by children, more rarely by grown-ups, and it communicated its magic in some degree to all of us."  Eric Newby in the Panjshir Valley, 1956 (from a "A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush ")

1960  "The practice of Buddhism has been extinct in Bamian for perhaps eleven hundred years by now, yet the peace which the practice brought with it still reigns here. You will feel it if you look out across the valley in the moonlight. There is peace in the glistening white poplar-trunks. There is peace in the shadowy shapes of the Buddhas and the caves. As you gaze, this Buddhist peace will come 'dropping slow' on your restless Western soul."  Arnold J. Toynbee, on a 1960 visit to the giant Buddhas of Bamian (destroyed by the Afghan Taliban (from 'Between Oxus and Jumna')

2001  "In the midst of hunger and war, the Afghans maintain a touching obsession with flowers. You see them planted and carefully watered in the front line and on patches of ground beside the road in impoverished dusty villages. Abdullah Abdullah, the foreign minister of the Northern Alliance, gives his press conferences in the splendid garden of a government guest house, which is filled with carefully tended orange, pink and scarlet flowers. The gardener in charge is determined to show his blooms to television viewers around the world. At the last press conference he first placed a large jug of them on the table in front of Mr. Abdullah. This was rapidly removed to make way for reporters’ microphones. Undaunted the gardener then tied a bouquet of pink flowers to a sapling just behind the minister's head until an officious security man told him to take them away."


NEWSLETTER  AUGUST 2002

TRAVELS IN KAZAKHSTAN WITH VLADIMIR THE ICEMAN

"My name is Vladimir, please call me Volodya," he said. "I am your mountain guide. I am an ice-climber." He was a gangling thirty-something, wearing baggy trousers and a red and white headband. He said he was a computer programmer but we guessed he did not do much programming and that his wife Olga, working for a software business, supported the household. "I'm afraid you won't be doing much ice-climbing with us," I said.

We had not asked for a guide but Volodya came as part of a package along with Alexei and his elderly Lada. The going rate of $100 a day for a car and driver, reduced in Kazakhstan to $70 per day with Volodya thrown in. We
had indicated that we wished to travel in mountainous areas, so obviously an old Lada and a mountain-guide was what we required. Volodya’s previous experience with foreigners appeared to have involved taking parties of Spanish climbers (who had spent most of their days arguing about where they were going to climb) into the Tien Shan. He did not consider the bulb-country of the Karatou or Karzhantau ranges to be proper mountains, so he seldom ventured away from Alexei and the Lada.

Much to Norman’s disgust, Volodya spent most of the time we were looking for plants cooking up delicacies for our return. Usually they would be based on a vast quantity of dried, chicken noodle soup, which had been produced from the cornucopia of his enormous Spanish backpack, but he progressed to all sorts of exotic dehydrations. One turned our teeth and lips purple. “It’s hibiscus from Egypt.” he said. We blamed all our internal disorders on it.

Volodya did become excited over petroglyphs, those pieces of prehistoric graffiti which are very common all through Central Asia. His late father had made a large collection and Volodya was always anxious to add to it. The springs of the Lada were much stressed when We returned to Almaty & Volodya went off for the night to Olga and his two daughters. “Were your daughters pleased to see you? What did they say?” asked Norman the next day. Volodya looked at him incredulously and did not reply. We imagined the return of Vladimir to the bosom of his family: "Mummy, mummy! Here comes that strange man again with a load of old rocks."

CENTRAL ASIA: A DETERIORATING SITUATION IN THE LAND OF THE NEW ‘GREAT GAME’
In June and July 2002 Jim travelled to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan with Norman Stevens. Some of the fruits of their journey, such as Iris and Tulipa seeds, are in this list. Seeds from other genera, such as Allium and Eremurus, will be in our next list. It was at times a frustrating experience. Norman had been to Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan in the 1980’s, when they were still part of the USSR. Since then unemployment and poverty have increased and much of the infrastructure has deteriorated. Further new local layers of bureaucracy have been superimposed on the old Soviet ones so that the endemic corruption is the significant growth-industry. Travel in Kazakhstan and parts of Kyrgyzistan is unrestricted and they remain possible destinations for suitably packaged tourists (rich Westerners now, of course, being more welcome than those from the old Communist-bloc countries) as indeed do the Uzbek cities of Tashkent, Bokhara and Samarkand. Away from such cities in Uzbekistan, access to the mountains was extremely difficult and may now be impossible. Just as we were leaving Uzbekistan new exclusion zones were put in place encompassing all the mountain areas, along with a 38km wide strip around the Uzbek border. Some of the doubtless generous revenue from the US for the use of the old Soviet bases at Karshi and Termez may well now be in foreign bank accounts but much is being spent on securing the somewhat unsavoury (former communist) Uzbek virtual-dictatorship: over-manned police road-blocks proliferate; a new black-clad, 'mountain police force' with patrolling helicopters is being instituted. All are just minor-plays in the new 'Great Game' of the 21st Century for access to the oil and gas of Kazakhstan , as well as the Caspian. Access to many of the plants of Central Asia may well not be any easier in future but we shall do our best to see they are secured & maintained in cultivation.

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2003

TASHKENT BOTANIC GARDEN  2002 :
OBVIOUSLY THE PLACE TO LEARN ABOUT THE FLORA OF CENTRAL ASIA
Norman had been taken around the Rustanov Botanic Garden many years ago by the assistant director, Igor Belolipov. We had a free morning in the city so decided to find him. The young girl at the gate of the garden had never heard of Igor Belolipov, world authority on the flora of Central Asia & curator of the great collection of plants amassed at Tashkent in the 1960s and 1970s. An elderly lady, the only other occupant of the office-building, was consulted and we were directed to the agricultural institute where he was now Professor of Botany. "You must see the gardens before you visit Professor Belolipov," she said, handing us a plan annotated in Russian. "Here are the plants from North America, here are the plants from the Far East and here are the plants from Central Asia." We wondered if she had looked at the gardens for the past decade. Nowhere was there anything but total neglect and overgrown dereliction. The only surviving & thriving inhabitants were the urban weeds of Central Asia.

Igor greeted us with delight and plied us with cups of herbal tea. Old photographs were produced of him with various notable American botanists, whom he had met during a visit to the USA in the 1970s: "Here I am with Professor Arthur Cronquist." "What happened to the botanic garden?" we asked. "After independence there was no money to pay anyone, so everyone left. I was lucky enough to find a position here. I am now the only professor of botany in Uzbekistan. I am paid $20 a month by the institute but I have a small pension from Soviet days, so my
wife and I can survive. It's not so bad. We can buy a kilo of meat each month for $5. When I go, there will not be a professor of botany in Uzbekistan anymore.” Perhaps he has been more fortunate since the disintegration of the “evil empire” than the amiable Professor Asimov who approached us in the lobby of the Hotel Uzbekistan on the morning of our arrival in Tashkent. He spent his days there hoping for an altruistic Egyptologist to materialise. "I do appreciate that you may not be able to help with any work in Egyptology but I thought you had kind faces," he had said. He would probably have been delighted to be engaged for $5 each week. "What can you get for $5 in Uzbekistan?” we asked our driver and some of his colleagues. "Quite a lot of bread," said Farid. "A taxi to Chimgan." (where we had just been with our car and driver at a cost of $100 for the day.) "A girl for a whole night," said Rustam from Samarkand. "And a professor of botany for a whole week," I added.

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2003

“YOU’VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD”
Perhaps we should say that we have never before had so many problems in fitting the seeds we have ready now into the available space. A list with more pages does not solve the problem as another page tips the weight into the next airmail rate-band, a considerable expense as well over half of our lists are sent out in this way. Last year, we moved all the North American species into a later list. This year, the South Africans and several complete genera have joined them. The knock-on effect of listing these in our January list meant that other species were held back for a March list, which never materialised. We had quite a lot of interesting 2002 seed which was never offered to you. This season, we have to tighten everything up as we shall be abroad in January and February, 2004, and want to clear all orders before we go. There will be another list before the end of 2003. So, forgive us for cutting the gossip and chat on our front-page and, indeed, throughout the list. A partial solution to listing out all the seeds we have at the best times for sowing and, at the same time, providing you with lots of information is approaching fruition.

HELP! ......COM
We cannot think of a business better suited to the opportunities offered by the internet than ours. We are highly specialized and deal with a diffuse, worldwide market. We mentioned that we hoped to initiate a web-site a year or so ago but progress has been slow, as there always seems to be more pressing work to do. It rapidly became obvious that it was necessary to rethink and develop the entire structure of listing out the seeds we have available. An efficient, easily accessible data-base had to form the basis both for information and ordering. We now have this approaching completion with over 1,000 items, (rather more than two of our present lists), entered. There will be lots of information and data but few pretty pictures at present. The site has been conceived for specialists who have a fairly good idea what they might be interested in rather than the impulse-buyer. Those who know their way around plants will find it easy and fast to navigate. You will be able to access it before the end of 2003. You will have the opportunity to order on line from the entire range of seeds currently available or to make up your order on line and printout the completed order form to mail with your cheque as you do at present. It will be possible to print-out a names-only list of all the seeds we have to offer and also to download a copy of the current mail-order list to print-out yourself. In this last respect, we should be glad to let you know when the next mail-order list is available. If these possibilities interest you, give us your e-mail address to enter on our customer data-base. You can do so with full confidence that it will be regarded as exclusively for our use. We shall certainly e-mail you when the long-awaited site is eventually launched.

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2003

VISIT US AT JJSeeds.com
Technophobes and those who have no access to or desire to use the internet must forgive us for concentrating on our web-site on the front-page of this paper list. We promise not to dwell on it again here and certainly not to become obsessed with the medium. Keith Lever, a self-declared technophobe, commented to us recently that he knew several good, hands-on gardeners who had now become internet gardeners more involved in communicating with others about the plants than growing the plants themselves. Do not expect us to join the ranks of cyber-gardeners.
We have just acquired more land adjacent to us in Wales and now have 1 hectare (about 2.5 acres) of moist, deciduous woodland and streamside offering more potential for the cultivation of an expanding range of species than our limited lifetimes will permit. The development and maintenance of our woodland garden will take preference over the development and maintenance of our web-site. We do not expect to be any more assiduous at replying to e-mails than we are in dealing with correspondence at present. Office-work, like our gardening, will
continue to be dealt with in spasms of activity. Absences abroad also make us ill-suited to the expectations of those used to communicating by e-mail.

Nevertheless, the internet is the place where a very small, very specialized business like this must be. It gives us almost unlimited potential to convey information about the plants and ensures that gardeners becoming more specialized in their interests can learn of our existence. We have not advertised this business for almost 20 years. There are many dedicated gardeners, especially those abroad, who know little about us or the plants with which we are involved. We have tried to make our web-site, like our business, as international as possible. Prices on the site are only in U.S.$ but there is a calculator to convert to £ sterling on the 'checkout page'. There is a handling charge of $5 added to online orders. This goes towards covering us for extra expense and currency fluctuations. U.K. and U.S. customers can make up an order online, print it out and mail it to us with a cheque in £ or $. If you write out your order, using the prices in this list, as you have all done before, there is no handling charge.

We do not anticipate a great change or increase in our business but we can now offer you the opportunity to access much more information on the full range of seeds we try to make available annually. Whether we like it or not, more choice and more information are characteristic of life in western society in the 21st Century.

NEWSLETTER JULY 2004

BRING ON THE CLOWNS

The tented Chelsea Flower Show ('sponsored by Merrill Lynch') is the public face of the Royal Horticultural Society. It has always had a certain attraction for those of us who have a nostalgic (but currently politically incorrect) weakness for circuses of the traditional kind. Just as old-fashioned circuses have changed over recent decades, so has Chelsea. Now, there is no high-wire act without a safety net. The big beasts have gone and we see more of the clowns.

In 2004, the publicity-hungry Royal Horticultural Society participated in a tedious television series (possibly more contrivance than reality), depicting the 'adventure' of television presenter Diarmuid Gavin, as he designed and constructed one of the outdoor gardens. The garden-design itself had considerably less artistic worth than much of the transient trivia collected by advertising agent Charles Saatchi, whose taste dictates the value of current 'Britart'. Its horticultural significance was negligible. Instead of ignoring it and justifying their decision by simply stating 'it was crap', the judges obsequiously awarded it a Silver Gilt (or should that be Guilt) Medal. Among several infantile ploys to make his 'adventure' more telegenic, the normally affable Gavin attempted to initiate a feud between himself and the adjacent garden-designer and announced that he had lied to the organisers about the funding for his garden. As Gavin's design was dominated by large, lurid, coloured balls from the start, one has the suspicion that he may well have lied about having lied. Such people are complex. Who else but Camelot, eventually revealed as the sponsor and to whom the British National Lottery is franchised, would have been prepared to pay-out an alleged £300,000 ($500,000) for a load of balls?

As with many establishment-institutions, the Royal Horticultural Society has reflected the changes in British society. Until about 30 years ago, it was dominated by the crumbling aristocracy and 'landed gentry'. It moved on to being run by money-men, the city capitalists and accountants. Now the clowns are being invited to take over the circus. The R.H.S. already has media 'celebrities' on its council and has recently bestowed its highest award on another television presenter. The water in which it is swimming may appear shallow but can be dangerous. Did the organisers of what they like to think is the greatest gardening show on earth really want to see themselves depicted on national television as gullible fools, conned by a liar? They are already obliged to keep stating, every time 'Chelsea Show' is mentioned, that it is 'sponsored by Merrill Lynch'. Doubtless seen as a shrewd move at the time, they now find themselves associated with a firm involved in a multitude of distasteful law suits on both sides of the Atlantic. According to another former pillar of the British establishment, 'The Times', documents it has seen "indicate that behind its pinstriped respectability, the US investment bank Merrill Lynch is ruled by leering bullies with a puerile obsession with sex."

It might be worse. Chelsea could have been 'sponsored by Enron' and Arnie Schwarznegger might have wanted to be elected President of the R.H.S.

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2004

SPINNING A NEW WORLD OF FANTASY GARDENS

A year or so ago, we tried, unsuccessfully, to access any publications on the Central Asian flora by entering 'flora-Uzbekistan' into a Google search. "Hello. My name is Flora and I live in Tashkent, Uzbekistan ...." was one result but adjacent to this was the web-site of a garden we visited in 2002, while attempting to trace its one-time director, Igor Belolipov. From the site we could learn that Tashkent "botanical garden is the museum in the open
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

air, national property and the pride of the Republic" representing "the 'golden fund' of botanical science" with a herbarium of international significance." It is a weed-ridden dereliction which the government stopped funding a decade ago. The unpaid staff simply walked away. Its urban site may well soon be carved up for 'development' by the Uzbek 'mafia'.

Much closer to home the National Botanic Garden of Wales, temporarily propped up by volunteer-workers and by a grant from the Welsh Assembly, claims that "The Garden of Wales is an internationally renowned centre for botanical science." No "botanical science" was ever centred there. The garden has never employed a botanist. Though Wales does not yet mirror Uzbekistan, there is now no Director of Horticulture and no Curator.

At no previous time has so much information been available to humanity and so much disinformation been disseminated. Governments, businesses, charities, single-interest groups and individuals make the most improbable, spurious statements knowing that they will be believed by a significant number of people and certain that it will take many words to refute them.

The 'success' of the much-praised Eden Project in Cornwall has been measured by its ability to attract tourists and their money. It has also been rated by one journalist as the biggest 'rip-off' in Britain. Both the praise and the criticism reflect more on the ability of its competent publicist, Tim Smit, a master of horticultural spin, than its intrinsic merits. One of its stated aims is "Communication through Science": "exploring a multi-layered approach to learning that uses technology without becoming a slave to it. The results are pioneering, and are certain not all to be successful, but they will be like nothing seen before." Such meaningless verbosity may impress 'the media' and 'the public' but we are unlikely to be able to read much about what the "pioneering results" might be as "Eden is not here to add more papers to unread scientific literature."

The fantasy of Tashkent Botanical Garden continues to exist in cyberspace but we can find no trace of 'Flora' from Uzbekistan. At best, she may have found the new partner she sought in a foreign land; at worst, she may have been 'disappeared' by the Uzbek secret police. In the device of the ancient Greek myths, she may live on in the flowers we list.

NEWSLETTER MARCH 2005

UK GOVERNMENT WARNS: “FOREIGN INVADERS THREATEN BRITISH NATIVES”

Amid the British pre-electoral hysteria regarding asylum-seekers, immigrants, Gypsies, Shylock-lookalikes and flying pigs, Ben Bradshaw, British Nature Conservation Minister, recently found a comfortable niche in one of the few socially acceptable refuges for those wishing to indulge their xenophobic or totalitarian inclinations. He warned the Annual Forum on Non-native Species that these species "can transform eco-systems and threaten native and endangered species. They can damage economic interests, such as agriculture, forestry and infrastructure, and can threaten public health." Mr Bradshaw assured the British electorate that the present government's "robust code of practice" will "help prevent problems" and that these "shouldn't happen now or in future." He warned, however, that there is "increasing risk" and that "invasions such as these are likely to increase in the future".

If only you knew what Mr Bradshaw knows. Sources indicate that the leading molecular biologists engaged in Saddam Hussein's 'weapons of mass destruction' programme may have been abducted by Al Quida, during the war. They are now believed to be held in a secret complex of caves, deep within the mountains on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Guarded by local tribesmen, they are alleged to be close to genetically modifying Himalayan balsam to disperse anthrax spores from its explosive seed-capsules in considerably less than 45 minutes. Attempts to stitch octopus DNA into Japanese knotweed to create a Boston Strangler Weed have reportedly met with less success. Early indications that large tracts of Afghanistan were being devoted to the cultivation of the giant hogweed have been disproved by recent surveys of the area. Only a vast increase in areas devoted to opium poppies has been observed, though North American invasion biologists fear that the purple patches are actually areas of purple loosestrife production. This "aggressive invader" is rated among the top ten by the U.S. National Invasive Species Council and a paper published in 'Bioscience' in 2000 gave it 'top billing' claiming that it is already costing the U.S. $45,000,000 annually. Lucrative contracts for herbicide production and aerial spraying may be awarded soon by the U.S. government. Following the Rose, the Cedar and the Tulip Revolutions, the U.K. government had endorsed a U.S. 'counter-terrorism' proposal, formulated by the C.I.A., for the mass-production of 'freedom flowers' for use in Iran and other 'rogue states' until it learned that there were plans for a homegrown British Bluebell Revolution, if there was a recurrence of vote-rigging in the forthcoming U.K. election.
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NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2005

KEW FLIES INTO A LITTLE TURBULENCE

We misguidedely chose to fly to Iran on the daily British Airways flight to Tehran as it was scheduled to land at a convenient time for us to set-off on our travels straight from the airport. It did not land at all, as it never took-off due to the "sudden illness of the first officer." Surprisingly, there were plenty seats for all the passengers on the flight leaving the next day. A free night in the Heathrow Hilton hardly compensated for the loss of a day in Iran. What do you do when stranded for 24 hours at Heathrow. "Let's go in to Kew to see Tony Hall," said Norman.

If only we had known then what we know now, we would have asked British Airways to arrange free entry into Kew. BA is a corporate member and "gives botanists free flights to visit far-flung places to collect specimens." The chairman of BAA, which owns Heathrow, is the chairman of the fund-raising Kew Foundation. The director of government affairs at BA is a member of the board of trustees. It's hardly surprising that Kew management is "resisting demands from its members and staff to lobby against" the expansion of Heathrow airport with its flightpath over Kew.

A year or so ago we commented on the close ties between the Royal Horticultural Society and the U.S. investment bank, Merrill Lynch. These are insignificant alongside the infiltration of Kew by the airline industry. Society readily condemns the possibility of corruption resulting from the close association of local or national government employees with large companies. There is less said about the links between 'charities', government and big business. Such links arc especially relevant to a charity such as Kew, which received £32.5 million of the British taxpayer's money last year and is also responsible for advising on government policy and implementing government legislation.

EXTENDING OUR POSSIBILITIES

These words are being written amidst an increasingly chaotic surroundings. We are presently involved in extending our house to accommodate the increased volume of seeds with which we have become involved. We shall have a new (tidier) office and better seed drying and cleaning facilities, as well as much more space in which to operate. In the meantime, we live in the midst of an explosion of seed envelopes, books and papers. Construction work seems to necessitate invading every room of our home. We had hoped to keep the disruption out of our existing office but new electrical wiring has just meant that further boxes, files and papers have had to be piled on to the existing chaos. Forgive us if we are even more inefficient than usual this season. We'll do our best to get orders out as quickly as possible and hope that life will become more organized over the next few months.

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2005

AN ECOSYSTEM UNDER STRESS

Our building work is almost complete. We have a new office and seed-room but we are still working in a chaotic state. What we now lack is the time to move into these and to reorganize ourselves. It will happen soon. At least we are now free from the continual interruptions to our work. We had not realised just how fine a knife-edge we have been balancing on and how little it has taken to upset the equilibrium.

When we first started collecting and selling seeds over twenty years ago, our German friend, Dr Hans Simon, commented that he did not think it would be an easy way to earn a living. Now that we are growing and harvesting many of the seeds we list, as well as attempting to continue to make wild collections, it has become even less easy. We are constantly trying to divide our time between office-work, growing a considerable number of stock-plants and collecting.

This year, with the new pressure of building-work, the delicately balanced ecosystem of our household has all but collapsed. We hope that we shall prove sufficiently dynamic organisms to survive. We do not want to whine and whinge (the path we tread is solely of our own choosing) but make these comments as a preamble to offering our apologies for all delays, inefficiencies and confusions which may have arisen. Thanks to all of you for your patience and tolerance.

The present list includes several collections we have not been able to repeat for 20 years, even 40 years in one case. Many other interesting seeds have come in recently from other growers and collectors, so you will find the range eclectic. As we have concentrated on Eurasian species, we still have a lot of other outstanding 2005 seed.
material in hand and will try to get a further list out to you during the first half of 2006. By that time, we should have some new 2006 seeds from the southern hemisphere to offer. If we can wait until the 2006 hellebore seed is collected, we can offer this promptly, as we did in 2004. In 2005, the listing of hellebore seeds never took place. While it is doubtful that our small, very complex and intrinsically uneconomical business can ever be run really smoothly, we live in expectation of it being less inefficient in future, even if only marginally so.

Those of you who expect some comment from us on the present state of the horticultural or botanical world will have to forgive us for making none on this occasion. This is certainly not to say that there is nothing to comment on. The opposite is the case. Even British gardeners may not be able to ignore such developments as the Convention on Biodiversity or the Plant Varieties Act 1997 for much longer. Whenever new, ill-considered legislation appears, the opportunistic carpet-baggers, both moral and mercenary ones, follow. Vast and costly bureaucracies are built on the most insubstantial foundations. Their spurious attempts to justify their existence can result in the unwarranted and unnecessary erosion of personal freedoms. We shall consider the implications of some of these developments in future but you may be assured that we shall persist in our aim to disseminate seeds from new and horticulturally interesting species as widely as we can for as long as we are able to do so.

WELCOME JOHN AND ANITA

It has been a few years since John and Anita Watson issued a seed-list of their own. In the past they travelled to England from Chile to send out their lists and distribute the seeds. The whole operation was complex and not altogether practical. Moreover, they were becoming increasingly involved in the field-work necessary for their research on the Chilean and Argentinian flora, particularly the rosulate violas. They decided not to issue any further seed-lists. Horticulture was to be deprived both of their detailed knowledge of the Andean flora and their experience of seed-collecting. The loss of this expertise, accumulated over a lifetime, was a tragedy for gardeners. We prevailed on them to keep collecting even if it was only to run up the road from their Chilean home in Los Andes to the most accessible localities. They have indeed done this on our behalf but they have also sent seeds from many other areas. Much material from the corner where the borders of Chile, Bolivia and Argentina come together has never been collected before and might never be collected again. The Andes are vast and we hope John and Anita will continue to explore them. With your support we can keep them collecting.

DNA (CON)SEQUENCES

'The Plantsman' purports to be the upmarket publication of the Royal Horticultural Society. While some subscribers are currently criticising it for becoming increasingly 'dumbed-down' (and this charge can be justified), we personally find its pseudo-scientific pretensions and obsequious deference to any 'scientific publication' more tiresome. The March 2006 issue contained a lengthy article on DNA markers for identifying Penstemon cultivars which did not tell us much, if anything, we did not know already (e.g. most cultivars are hybrids of P. cabaea and P. hartwegii or "P. Mexican sp.") but betrayed a frightening unfamiliarity with the other species in this genus (e.g. Penstemon 'Sour Grapes' is "morphologically similar" to P. newberryi subsp. sonomensis." There was also an account by John Grimshaw of the genus Leucojum. It incorporated conclusions based on DNA sequences and reached by five botanists at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The results of their work supported the division of the genus. R.A. Salisbury proposed this in 1807. It may have taken the botanical world 200 years to accept it but it is an opinion which any gardener who knows these plants would reach. We are more than happy to list the plants under the two generic names: Acis and Leucojum. The sensible conclusion based on this ground-breaking DNA study is not what concerns us. The scary bit is in the small-print: one of the Kew authors, Mark Chase, rather than splitting Leucojum, was all for throwing the whole lot into the genus Galanthus but was "overruled" by his colleagues (who may well have had to threaten to call in 'the men in white coats'). What might have happened had the "overruling" not taken place? Would 'The Plantsman' and consequently the RHS have gone along with this? On their previous record, the answer is "Yes."

Conclusion (as they say in all 'scientific publications'): an obsession with monophyly in conjunction with exposure to DNASTAR™ software can lead to serious tunnel-vision.

SEE YOU IN COURT
The Archibald Files -or- the world according to Jim

We have often used the front page of our lists to express points of view, which are not voiced by the horticultural and botanical establishments. While our short polemics can doubtless be labelled as pieces of self-indulgence, we hope that they have sometimes stimulated thought. Most gardeners tend to avoid controversy, so it has been good to see a fellow gardener and plant-collector, Michael Wickenden, conduct his own campaign against the Plant Breeders' Rights legislation. He lays out his arguments in the introduction to his Cally Gardens catalogue and has published an article in 'The Plantsman'. The (unedited) version is on his web-site at www.callygardens.co.uk.

We had some brief correspondence with Michael when he was writing this article and we told him we felt that it was not a matter about which we felt very strongly. But then we had not been threatened by opportunist bullies who had neither legal nor moral justification for their claims. Our feeling was that Michael should just call their bluff. Our good friend, another Michael, a retired Chief Inspector of Police, has a standard, calm response to such bluster: "That's alright then. See you in court." As far as we know, there has never been a court case. The parameters and interpretation of the legislation remain untested by a British court, which, of course, makes it easy for carpet-baggers to misuse it.

Neither Michael Wickenden nor ourselves would deny a reward to a genuine plant-b breeder, who has spent time and money in producing a new cultivar. What we all deprecate is the fact that Plant Breeders' Rights are being claimed on old cultivars or on plants which occurred naturally. We should probably differ with Michael in arguing there is nothing wrong with trademarking a new cultivar name, where considerable promotion and advertising has been involved. For several years Denver Botanic Garden has collaborated with local growers in propagating plants suitable for the Rocky Mountain States, marketing them under new popular names. Some of these are pure species. Some have been raised from seeds we have collected. Such a plant is the foxglove 'Spanish Peaks', which is Digitalis thapsi raised from our 1991 collection, JJA12707. We have no problem with this. We should have no problem with anyone preventing us from listing this under the name 'Spanish Peaks'. What we should take extreme exception to is someone trying to prevent us from listing seeds of Digitalis thapsi. It would definitely be a case of "See you in court." This possibility is not remote. The guardians of British horticulture, the Royal Horticultural Society, appear to have obsequiously accepted Kew's fundamentalist interpretation of the Convention on Biodiversity. It has yet to be implemented by the British government. Fortunately, the USA has not signed the convention. We wait to see which way the RHS wriggles and shall return to this subject.

We wholeheartedly share Michael Wickenden's argument: "Nature should not be owned. Natural genetic material should be freely available to anybody with the energy and ingenuity to make use of it, as has always been the case." We believe this applies to countries and companies as well as individuals.

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2007

Our apologies for the extremely late appearance of this 2007 list. We have simply had too much to do: trying to maintain a fairly large garden and keep the collection of plants (which form the parent-stocks of much of the seed we list) in good condition; trying to collect new material abroad; trying to keep up with collecting, cleaning & packeting seed here; despatching orders; etc; etc. It has simply meant that something that could be delayed has been delayed. We hope to catch-up a little over the coming winter and that a further list will not be long in appearing.

F & W

We list the first of the Flores & Watson, 2007 South American collections in this list, concentrating solely on the 'monocots'. In addition to their Chilean collections, John & Anita Watson have sent seeds from Catamarca & Tucuman, up towards the far N.W. corner of Argentina, an area where very little collecting has ever been done. Consequently there is exciting new material of species unfamiliar to gardeners. Their collections of herbaceous plants (including introductions of previously ungrown species of Salvia, Lupinus, Ipomoea and other genera) and alpines (untried species of Calceolaria, Nototriche, Viola etc.) will be in our next list. Sale of this seed will help us to continue to support their work, which has also been backed by grant from the Alpine Garden Society to enable them to pursue their research into rosulate Viola spp. This season they are heading South into Argentinean Patagonia, perhaps too early for many 2008 seed collections, so make the most of these listings. Identifying much of this new Argentinian material takes time. They have done a splendid job but note reservations such as 'cfr.' and 'aff.' where there is uncertainty. In a few cases there remain problems. We may find it difficult to persuade you to try "F.& W.11444 :Indet. (yellow)" or, as John puts it, "a member of the Unknowniaceae."

APG II

There are likely to be many more "Unknowniaceae" families in future, as far as gardeners are concerned. You may think that APG II, the latest Angiosperm Phylogeny Group classification is irrelevant to your gardening. It may well be at present as it is still concerned with families. Vernon Heywood, editing the new popular work 'Flowering
Plant Families of the World’, comments that the families he accepts have increased from 306 to 506 since 1978. Wait for the molecular biologists to turn to genera and species. “Taxonomic inflation” may well be rampant though “some propose dispensing with species altogether.” All we gardeners, certainly the largest group of users of plant taxonomy, want is a relatively stable language so that we can communicate. A revolution may be coming. Let’s make a start by refusing to move *Cimicifuga* into *Actaea.*

At present, in botanical taxonomy: “The whole worl’s in a state o’ chassis!”

WWW
‘Chassis’ is what we seek to avoid by temporarily discontinuing online ordering on our web-site. We just cannot find time to maintain this and deal with an inflow of orders throughout the year. We need to re-think online ordering, perhaps just concentrating on listing seeds from a few genera, such as *Iris, Lilium* and *Narcissus.*

(Ed.: N.B. The web-site JJAseeds.com is no longer extant)

**NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2008**

**WILD WALES 2008**

We do not imagine that any book written by George Borrow is much read nowadays but when, in 1862, he published ‘Wild Wales’, accounting his journeys through the principality, often on foot, he contributed greatly to increasing awareness of life in rural Britain among urban Victorians. Today Wales may not be as wild as it was in Borrow’s time but gardening here remains a little closer to a battle with nature than it might be in some more cloistered urban environments. The weather is as wild as ever it was.

We have lived in West Wales since 1988 but have never experienced such torrential rain with such frequency as we have over the last nine months. A valley-bottom with a stream running through is an attractive site in which to garden but we must never forget that almost all the water falling on both sides of the valley will eventually end up at the bottom. It has been the amount of this water falling in a very short time and the speed of its descent which has been our problem recently. We are often asked what the rainfall is here. Unlike some of our friends we do not assiduously keep records so we cannot be precise. We usually reply, “A lot. About 2m or more than 6ft, if you like, annually.” Somehow, in our climate, metres or feet seem more appropriate units of measurement than millimetres or inches. Not so long ago, before we were being told that heat and drought were going to be the gardening problems of the future, we had an abnormally high rainfall one year. A nearby village recorded about 8ft, I guess we may have exceeded that. We live near the head of the valley, a convenient place for the clouds sweeping in from the West to offload their burden, The overall volume of rain is not a problem but this year vast amounts have fallen in short spaces of time. Our stream has flooded four times since last December. Up till now we expected that it would do so only every few years, The most recent flood, a few weeks ago, was the most ferocious we have seen. The torrent gouged out the boulder-clay of the stream-bed, lowering its level by about a foot in some places, depositing tons of stones and gravel in others and all but foiling our attempts to keep the stream on a managed course.

We have been very discriminating on what we have beenplanting alongside the stream and in the wet valley-bottom. Woody genera such as *Ailnus, Metasequoia, Nyssa* and *Liquidambar* are well-adapted to ground which is periodically water-logged or inundated. Wet-growing species both woody and herbaceous, have evolved over millenia to be comparatively flood-proof and we have had almost no losses, although almost all of the planting is comparatively recent, it is not easy to shift a clump of *Lysichiton or Crinum*, as anyone who has tried to move them will know, The tenacity of streamside plants can be impressive. We recollect seeing *Darmera peltata* all but choking a fast-flowing stream in northern California. The only significant loss was quite a large *Fargesia nitida*,

.which was undercut by the water and whipped out of the ground. It may well now be floating in the Irish Sea. It was no great loss. It was in flower and we have been saved the work of removing a dead plant in future.

Our home lies high above the stream on the side of the valley. We can look out across our field to the two ponds we have excavated. They remain unfinished with their margins still unplanted, The ground around them has stayed too wet all summer to allow access for machinery to work on the banks. It is the second year that it has remained too soft for us get a digger in to finish these, dig more ditches and complete paths in the valley-bottom. It is hopeless to attempt this in winter. It is at such a time we feel the impatience of age. Can we afford yet another year? We can only hope for a drier 2009.

**NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2008**

**MONOCOTYLEONOUS GEOPHYTES**

This is the most succinct way of telling you what this list is about. It may sound pretentious but it is shorter than saying 'bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes, mostly belonging to what in distant days were the families Iridaceae,
Amaryllidaceae and Liliaceae'. There are a few dicotyledonous geophytes, such as summer-dormant Ranunculus, here and a few other odds and ends have crept in as well but the overall emphasis is on plants which retire to some sort of underground storage organ at some time of the year. This is usually in summer but there are winter-dormant species among the South Africans and East Asians. We have tried to compile a list of all we have available, which means quite a lot are listed as names only without descriptions. We have also included those which were in our last list with descriptions and data, such as Muscari and Scilla, only under their specific names. In recent years, we have been harvesting quite a lot of our own cultivated seed, which has never reached a seed-list. This is terribly inefficient of us so we are trying to put the matter right with these 2008 seeds. Apologies that it takes so long to clean, packet and catalogue such seed out we just do not seem able to organise everything together, both from our own garden and from friends, before mid-winter.

A ‘BULB’ LIST IN SUMMER 2009?
Lack of time during our depressingly wet year (we fear the weather has not improved here but at least we have not had torrents eroding the garden again) meant that we could not put together a short list of surplus offset 'bulbs' in 2008. We hope to do better in 2009. Many stocks will need to be repotted next year and there will be more than we require of several. We may be able to include this offer with a summer list of southern hemisphere species but we may, on this occasion, send a separate list. We shall try to ensure everyone who ordered bulbs previously is sent a list but it will do no harm to let us know now if you are interested, just in case you slip through the net. We shall, of course, only be able to send such living material to customers within the EU area, where a phytosanitary certificate is not required.

“THE POUND IN YOUR POCKET”
Our disillusionment with politicians began many decades ago with the television-appearance of the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, following a devaluation of British currency. He assured his viewers that, of course, the devaluation did not mean that the pound in their pockets was worth less. Since then we have been of the same mind as the most ruthless of British television interviewers, Jeremy Paxman, who once described his premise in questioning politicians as "Why is this lying bastard, lying to me?" Now that the £ sterling is floating in the wild seas of the international currency markets, it is worth less and less each day. Forget the government "borrowing", low interest rates and pathetic tinkering and ask who at such a time would want to hold the currency of a country, whose inhabitants are carrying personal debts of £3,000,000,000,000 (we think we have the correct number of O’s; £3 trillion, anyway). We juggled about with our prices, to try to attain some balance, in our usual 'swings and roundabouts' fashion, but already some reduced € prices look disproportionately high. As the fantasy world of the hedge-funds dissolves and banks become increasingly insolvent, please feel free to price your order in anyone of the three currencies, pay in that or convert it into another one at the current exchange rate. In any event, we are sure we do not need to tell you a packet of seeds might be one of best investments you could make, though it could be risky and is certainly be a long-term one. You can even purchase this investment on your credit card ! We hope some of you have enough $s £s or €'s left to buy a few seeds but whatever the case, our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported our work in 2008 and our best wishes for 2009.

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2009
AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD
Regular customers will be familiar with our tiresome annual apology for the late appearance of our seed-list. This year it is even later than usual.
A seemingly trivial bump the size of a small tree-peony seed behind Jim’s left ear proved to be cancerous (a 'squamous cell carcinoma' for those who like precision). Four days after learning the result of the biopsy, Jim was having his neck and shoulder filleted (a 'radical neck-dissection') by a reputed expert in efficiently popping out lymph-nodes like shelling peas from a pod. Fair-haired, blue-eyed boys who spend much of their lives outside (especially ones who crawl about on their hands and knees collecting seeds at high altitudes in places like Nevada, the Andes and Iran) tick a lot of boxes when it comes to vulnerability to skin-cancers. After more than a fortnight in hospital, two months 'off work' are advised (they must be joking; common-sense prevails).
We mention all this only to keep you informed. As Jim always finds the inclination of one British 'celebrity gardener' to keep reminding everyone of his depressive illness nauseating, he would be grateful if your reaction remains unstated, no matter whether it is sympathetic or "Only himself to blame."

FEW BULBS REPOTTED IN THIS YEAR
"Events" have meant that the anticipated list of surplus offset and seedling bulbs will not be appearing this year.
Instead of continuing with repotting, a hectic few days were spent frenetically tidying up and watering bulb-stocks
The Archibald Files - or - the world according to Jim

before Jim went into hospital. We have your expressions of interest on file and we shall hope to be able to do something about this in 2010.

ALL GOING WELL THERE IS MORE SEED TO COME
Our next list of 2009 seeds is already roughed out. Monocotyledonous genera not included here will be listed in it. There will be extensive ranges of genera such as Colchicum, Fritillaria, Muscari, Paeonia, Scilla and Tulipa, including some species not listed before by us and others not offered for many years.

How soon we can get this to you simply depends on how busy we are with orders and how long it takes us to organize and packet this next batch of seed.

R.H.S. SINKS TO NEW LOW IN SELF-PROMOTION
Not since Kew encouraged the tabloid press to photograph Peter Boyce posing in a World War II gas-mask beside a flowering aroid, has a British horticultural institution so debased itself. In a pathetic effort to acquire a few column-inches of publicity, the Royal Horticultural Society attempted to cash-in on the Darwin bicentenary by playing a tape of the voice of one of Darwin’s descendants to a tomato-plant. Snide allusions to Prince Charles' alleged inclination to converse with vegetables were inevitable in newspaper reports. The 'scientific experiment' (yes, incredibly, it really was presented as such) 'proved' this induced better growth than a reading from 'The Day of the Triffids'. All the accompanying photograph of a benighted employee, holding what looked like a bonsai elder-seedling in an old clay pot, achieved was to convince us that Wisley could not grow decent tomato-plants, no matter what was said to them.

BULB LIST 2010
A BRIEF UPDATE:
We had planned to send out this bulb list to customers in the UK and rest of the EU in July, 2010, along with a summer seed list.
Sadley, circumstances have altered considerably over the past few weeks. In June, Jim was diagnosed with a brain cancer (“incurable” and “inoperable”) so Jenny is now almost entirely in charge and feels that she must move as quickly as possible to clear as much stock as possible. Over the next few months, we want to reduce our stocks by 75% at least. So, while we have more or less retained the original format for this list our emphasis has moved from small surplus bulbs to flowering sized bulbs. As we have included many flowering sized bulbs we must make an additional charge for postage on bulb orders. As quite a lot of material will be small enough to go into our standard seed-packets, small orders may be sent in padded envelopes. In this case, if you have sent an excess for postage we shall include extra bulbs to compensate. If we have enough material, we shall not be ungenerous.

Jim Archibald died on August 9, 2010 aged 68

At their last AGS Show, the South Wales Show 2010, Jim and Jenny won the Farrer Medal with a magnificent plant of Colchicum hungaricum.

Jenny Archibald : EXCLUSIVE SEEDS JANUARY 2011
As many of you will already know, most of our stock plants have now gone to new homes so I am going to put JJA Seeds to bed after 27 years of trading. So, first of all, thank you to all of our customers who have ordered from us in the past. I hope that you have as many happy memories as I do and that Jim’s legacy lives on in your gardens. As I look back, it is absolutely amazing how many species we have handled and supplied and how many people have delved into our seed lists over the years. Thank you for all this. Thanks to a huge amount of help and boundless enthusiasm from friends, I have managed to put together this list of seeds which are currently available. The flowers were pollinated and the seed collected, in between hospital visits and also by our many friends who have kindly donated some exceptional species. As you can imagine, it has not been easy to bring this together without Jim’s encyclopaedic knowledge and recall of plants and places but it has now fallen into place and I hope that you can find something of interest.
Again thank you so much for your support.