

## An appeal from Joe...

I would like to repeat the appeal I made at the A.G.M. We have about 200 members. Shade Monthly needs about 4 items for 11 months of the year, say 50 per year. If each one of you were actively sending in items, you would only have to do so once every four years for us to have a vibrant newsletter. We are not looking for erudite insights or long complex articles. A few words with a picture or two is all we need! Give it a try! (Please send contributions to [wasjsime@gmail.com](mailto:wasjsime@gmail.com).)

## Plant of the Month: *Anemone apennina* 'Petrovac'

Joe Sime



Following the AGM's visit to the national collection of *A. nemorosa* I thought it would be good to feature another woodland anemone. *A. apennina* is similar to *A. blanda*, but the stems are softly hairy and it is more of a 'clumper' than 'spreader'. 'Petrovac' is a variety collected in former Yugoslavia by Paul Christian of the 'Rare Plants' nursery. It is an excellent form with good, darkish but clear blue flowers. I bought mine two years ago from Edrom Nurseries. It has settled in well, planted in an area of open shade, in a good, rich woodland soil. It is summer dormant and will be out of the way before its taller neighbours get going.

## **‘Not Another Hydrangea’: *H. macrophylla* ‘Izu-no-hana’**

*Joe Sime*

I have chosen this plant this month because a gentleman brought one in to the members' plant stall at the AGM. I persuaded a couple to buy it, and so I thought they might like to read a little bit about it.



There are far too many varieties of *H. macrophylla* in the trade, many of them indistinguishable from each other by all but the obsessed. They can also suffer from late frosts. With the exception of a few modern varieties they flower on year old wood. In the wild they come from coastal areas in Japan, and although they get cold winters, once spring comes there are few frosts. This means that a mild period in February here can deceive them into breaking bud only to have them frazzled by a later cold spell.

This can be a problem with ‘Izu-no-hana’ (Flower of Izu), which was found in the wild on the Izu peninsula, south of Tokyo. Young plants in particular can be susceptible once the buds are swollen, but this can usually be solved by throwing a piece of fleece over it if hard, late frosts are expected.

It makes a good rounded shrub to about 4 ft. It has beautiful lace cap flowers. The fertile florets are deep blue (or mauve). Whilst there are relatively few sterile florets these are fully double and held on longish stalks away from the central boss. They are lighter in colour than the fertile florets. This gives the inflorescence a delicate appearance unlike most *macrophylla* varieties which tend to be a bit ‘in-your-face’.

It is worth saying something about flower colour in *H. macrophylla*. If there is an adequate supply of soluble aluminium ion for the developing flower buds, then flowers are on the blue side, if not, then they veer to the pink. Whether there is soluble aluminium available depends on whether there is any aluminium in the soil (hence the sale of aluminium salts as 'blueing' agents for hydrangeas), whether it is soluble (it is insoluble at alkaline pH) and whether the roots of the plant are sufficiently mature to transport the aluminium to the flower bud (hence newly planted plants are often pinkish and turn blue after a year or two.)

The plant in the photo has only been in the ground for a year, and, although the soil is on the acid side of neutral, it is pink. The parent from which it is a cutting is a good blue. Luckily it looks good regardless of the colour!

## **Nice Thugs: *Pulmonaria angustifolia***

*Joe Sime*

We have had this plant for 24 years. At £4.00 it seemed quite expensive in 1994 but it has earned its keep over the years. It even moved house with us.

It comes from central and north-eastern Europe and is known as the 'blue cowslip'. The narrow (for a pulmonaria) leaves emerge in early spring. They are dark green and unmarked. The good blue flowers open at the same time and continue for a couple of months. After flowering, the leaves become grotty and should be removed.



Apart from this it needs no care and will spread to form a good mat in shade. I find it superior to many of its relatives in its robust, easy habits and the fact that the flowers don't end up half way between pink and blue. There are some varieties with flowers of different blue shades. They all look good.

## Available Seed

If you would like some of the seed offered below, please send a SAE to S.J.Sime, Park Cottage, Penley, Wrexham LL13 0LS.

If you have seed to donate, please send it to the same address

*Arisaema taiwanense* f. *cinereum* BSWJ3602

*Arisaema candissimum*

*Cardiocrinum giganteum* var *yunnanaense*

*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*

*Iris douglasiana*

*Iris hookeri*

*Iris setosa* var. *arctica*

*Iris* sp. Trout River

*Lilium lijiangense*

*Lilium lophophotum* (large flowered)

*Lilium mackliniae*

*Lilium mackliniae* from Nagaland

*Liriodendron tulipifera*

*Notholirion bulbifera*

*Notholirion macrophyllum*

*Pterostyrax corymbosa*

*Sisyrinchium macrocarpum*

*Tricyrtis hirta*

*Clethra monostachya*

*Hydrangea aspera* ex 'Bellevue'

*Hydrangea heteromalla* Bretschneideri Group

*Hydrangea paniculata* ex 'Tender Rose'

*Hydrangea serrata* subsp. *yezoense*

*Kirengeshoma palmata*

*Rhododendron yakusianum*

## Name this Plant

Joe Sime

Name this plant: T\*\*\*\*\* C\*\*\*\*\*

**Herbs** (often evergreen), rhizomatous, sometimes stoloniferous; caudex creeping, scaly; **Flowering stems** 15-40 cm. **Leaves** simple; cauline leaves absent or 1; petiole 0.2-2 dm; blade 3-13 × 3-10 cm. **Inflorescences** racemes, 15-50-flowered, 4-40 × 1-2 cm. **Pedicels** subtended by finely dissected bracts, 0.1-0.8 cm, glandular-stipitate. **Flowers:** hypanthium campanulate, 3-6 mm, glandular-stipitate; perianth radially symmetric; sepals spreading at anthesis, reflexed in fruit, 1.5-3.5 × 0.5-1 mm; petals caducous, spreading, oblanceolate to elliptic, unlobed, 0.6-1 × 3-4.5 mm, base clawed, apex 3-toothed; stamens equal, 2-6 mm; anthers oval, 0.3-0.5 mm. **Capsules** 0.5-1.1 cm. **Seeds** 4-15, ellipsoid, 0.9-1 × 0.4-0.7 mm. **2n** = 14. Flowering Mar-Jul; fruiting Apr-Sep. Open and shady, dry to swampy deciduous woods, along streams; 40-800 m; Eastern North America.

The solution to last month's puzzle was *Rodgersia podophylla*.

Although there are many fine modern varieties and hybrids of *Rodgersia*, this basic species takes a lot of beating. It is big, bold and vigorous. The leaves are beautifully bronzed and take on nice tones in the autumn. It will thrive in moist soil in shade, needing more moisture the sunnier the site.



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*SHADE MONTHLY* is compiled by Joe Sime  
and this web-friendly version was produced by Tony Bays.