

The Meconopsis Group

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Newsletter September 2010

Dear Member,

A warm welcome if this is your first newsletter from us. We hope that existing and new members will be able to join us at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on Nov. 20th 2010 for our next Group meeting.

Gardening Scotland Show 2010

For the fourth year running The Meconopsis Group had a stand at Gardening Scotland, once again painstakingly and tastefully designed by Geoff Hill, and assembled and manned by Geoff and a number of members. It was gratifying that the display received a Silver Gilt award from the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society.

The display featured the usual array of fine photographs of different species and cultivars of *Meconopsis* as a backdrop to the stand and large clumps of big blue poppies in pots, supplied by Evelyn Stevens. A new dimension this year was the selling of *Meconopsis* seed and this proved to be very popular with the public. The seeds sold “like hot cakes”! Let us hope that as a result, there will be a big increase in *Meconopsis* growing amongst Scottish gardeners in the years to come – which, after all, is a major part of our mission.

Special lectures by Toshio Yoshida

Over 70 members and friends of the Group were present on May 8th at the RBGE to hear Toshio Yoshida, the renowned plant photographer and field botanist from Japan, speak on “Photographing plants in wildest China, with the main emphasis on *Meconopsis*”.

His morning lecture took us to Yunnan (2006-2009); in the afternoon we also saw his recent work in Sichuan. A report of these lectures is included with this newsletter.

***Meconopsis* on trial**

Following a number of years of negotiations, we are pleased that the Royal Horticultural Society has undertaken to conduct a trial of a range (23 in total) of the big perennial blue poppy cultivars to assess them for the Award of Garden Merit (AGM). This award, by an appropriate RHS committee, may be given to a plant after a period of trial.

The purpose of the award is to help gardeners choose plants judged for their all-round garden value. The *Meconopsis* trial is to run from 2010 – 2013. The trial has been set up at Harlow Carr. Also, for comparisons to be made in a range of different growing conditions, two other RHS gardens (Wisley and Rosemoor), together with Holehird in Windermere and a private garden in central Scotland are growing the same range of cultivars. At present the only big blue perennial poppy hybrids with an AGM is *M.* ‘Slieve Donard’.

The plants have now settled in well, and continue to thrive in their new surroundings.

Paypal

It is hoped to set up a Paypal account to enable subscriptions to be paid for 2011. This should benefit non-UK members in particular. Cheques (and cash) will continue to be accepted. Details when available.

Seed Exchange

The current Seed Exchange letter is enclosed/attached

Programme for the Group meeting on November 20th 2010
Conference Room, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 10.00 – 15.30
Meeting Chairman: John Mitchell

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| 10.00 - 10.30 | Arrival - Complimentary Teas and Coffees | |
| 10.30 - 10.40 | Announcements | John Mitchell |
| 10.40 - 11.40 | “Growing <i>Meconopsis</i> in Bavaria” | Jenny Wainwright-Klein |
| 11.40 - 12.20 | ‘Taxonomic problems’ | James Cobb |
| 12.20 - 13.15 | Bring your own Picnic lunch - tea and coffee provided | |
| 13.15 - 13.45 | “ <i>Meconopsis</i> at Holehird” | Pat Murphy |
| 13.45 - 14.30 | “ <i>Meconopsis</i> type specimen collection at RBGE” | Alan Elliott |
| 14.30 - 15.00 | “Plants for naming” | Evelyn Stevens |
| 15.00 - 15.30 | Members’ Discussion | |

Meeting Arrangements

Venue The Conference Room of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is at 20a Inverleith Row Edinburgh EH3 5LR. If you require directions please access the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh website, or contact me. There is also a regular bus service from Central Edinburgh if you are coming by train.

Meeting Charge There will be a nominal charge of £1 to attend this meeting, but this will include a numbered ticket. (Plants or seeds for lucky numbers). Additional tickets can be purchased to help defray costs.

50:50 Plant Sale Please bring plants for a 50:50 plant sale (2 labels per pot, one for your name and the price, the other for the plant name). This is an important part of our day as the sale of plants will help to distribute the plants more widely among members and will boost our funds. *Meconopsis* and other plants are welcome.

Picnic lunch Please bring your own lunch to the meeting. Tea and coffee will be provided at 10.00am and at lunchtime.

Guests will be made very welcome.

Note for New Members If you are unsure of the arrangements please contact Norma McDowall.

Suggestions for future speakers

Suggestions for future speakers and topics are invited. If you would like to volunteer, it need not be a full hour - short talks would be very welcome. Please contact any Committee member.

Spring Group meeting - March 5th 2011

The Spring 2011 Group meeting and AGM will be held at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh on Saturday 5th March 2011.

Items enclosed / attached

I enclose /attach a number of items following our Group meeting on 8th May 2010

- Newsletter September 2010
- Talk 1: Quest for *Meconopsis* in Yunnan 2006-9’ by Toshio Yoshida
- Talk 2: Quest for *Meconopsis* in Sichuan 2009’ by Toshio Yoshida
Please note change of title from published program!
- Seed Exchange letter

If you do not receive any of them, please let me know.

If you have any problems with this mailing please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes

Norma McDowall (Secretary)