

The Meconopsis Group

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Newsletter May 2011

Dear Member,

The *Meconopsis* plants (at least in the West of Scotland) survived the winter snows, and came into flower very early despite the very dry spring and then a very wet spell. Now I hope you have not suffered storm damage over the last few days. The cultivars in my garden did manage to stay upright, but were tangled and water damaged. They now appear more 'purple' than previous years. Do other members find likewise?.....topic for discussion?

Latest news

**Congratulations to Stella and David Rankin of Kevock Garden Plants
for their Silver Gilt Award at Chelsea Flower Show!**

Gardening Scotland Show 3rd, 4th and 5th June

We have a stand at the Gardening Scotland Show at Ingliston, Edinburgh. Please come and visit!
A meeting of the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee of the RHS will be convened at Gardening Scotland.

Biscot 2011 Exhibition at Gardening Scotland

Dr. Janet Watson will be exhibiting 8 paintings of big perennial blue poppies at the Biscot 2011 Exhibition at Gardening Scotland from 3rd - 5th June. The paintings will then be transferred to the Fletcher Building at the RBGE and exhibited there for another 2 - 3 weeks.

The Meconopsis cultivars Janet has painted are M. 'Jimmy Bayne', M. 'Ascreavie', M. 'Barney's Blue' of the George Sherriff Group and M. 'Mrs. Jebb', M. 'Slieve Donard', M. 'Bryan Conway', M. 'Maggie Sharp' and M. 'Bobby Masterton' of the Infertile Blue Group. These cultivars were chosen because each one has very distinctive definitive characteristics of leaves, flowers and fruits. The paintings - images of the upper part of the flowering stem - are all life size and include buds, newly opening flowers, fully open flowers, seed heads, leaf whorls and cauline leaves.

All but one of the paintings will be offered for sale, though paintings cannot be removed until the end of the exhibition at RBGE. Janet has kindly offered to reduce the price for members of The Meconopsis Group. Janet would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Evelyn Stevens, who has given freely of her time, expertise and Meconopsis plants to help her in her work over the past 6 years.

Next Group meeting - November 19th 2011

**The next Group meeting will be held in the Conference Room
at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) at 10.00am for 10.30am.**

The provisional programme is again interesting and varied. Speakers include Jenny Wainwright -Klein from Germany, Evelyn Stevens, Tim Lever, Margaret Thorn and James Cobb.

The detailed programme for the meeting will be sent out in the autumn.

Short account of *Meconopsis wilsonii* subspecies

Prof. David Rankin has kindly produced this account for members. It is sent as a PDF mail item.

Gardens to visit now

1 The Woodland Garden at the **Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh** has been planted with *Meconopsis* recently given Awards. It is open daily at this time of year from 10am to 7pm. Garden entry is free, with a charge for the Glasshouses.

2 **Branklyn Garden** (NTS) in Perth has a range of outstanding plants - rhododendrons, alpines, herbaceous and peat-garden plants. There is now a National Collection of *Meconopsis*.

Steve McNamara has developed a *Meconopsis Trail*, with Fact sheets detailing the location of many of the named plants. Gardens open daily 10 am to 5 pm at 116 Dundee Road, Perth PH2 7BB

There are other Gardens to visit too - **Explorers, The Scottish Plant Hunters Garden** (Pitlochry), **Logan Botanic Garden**, (Port Logan), **Dawyck Botanic Garden**, (Peebles) and **Crarae Garden**, (NTS) (Inveraray).

Web-site

Our Group Convenor, Evelyn Stevens, and web-site manager, Peter Taylor, now have the "Species in the wild" section of the web-site well underway. They would be very pleased to receive further contributions of photographs of *Meconopsis* growing in the wild (both close-ups of the plants and habitat shots) to consider for adding to the site. These could either be sent electronically (to plantmatters@thelinns.org.uk or as loaned prints or slides (the latter would be treated with great care and returned immediately after scanning) to Dr. Evelyn Stevens, The Linns, Sheriffmuir, Dunblane, Perthshire, FK15 0LP, Scotland, U.K. Photographers will be acknowledged on the site, and for copyright protection - see existing entries: www.meconopsis.org and go to Plant Portraits, then to Species growing in the wild.

Meconopsis on trial

The main RHS Trial is taking place at Harlow Carr. 23 cultivars from three hybrid groups have been planted. Their performance will be compared to demonstrations at two other gardens in the UK - at Windermere and Stirling (The Linns, Dunblane). Planting at RHS Gardens Rosemoor and Wisley will show how they cope in hotter, drier areas. The committee which is assessing the trial is meeting at Harlow Carr on 2nd June and also visiting the "demonstration beds" at The Linns on the 4th and Holehird on the 6th.

Membership Renewal 2011

If you have sent your subscription but have not received a receipt and membership card please let me know.

Annual General Meeting 5th March 2011

The Minutes of the AGM will be available before the AGM to be held on March 3rd 2012.

Reports from the meeting held on March 5th 2011

I enclose with this newsletter a number of items from previous Group meetings. Most are in PDF.

- Newsletter May 2011
- 'Nepalese *Meconopsis* through the lens of Mike Hirst' by Jim Jermyn
- 'My experiences of *Meconopsis*' by Peter Cox
- '*Meconopsis* and botanical illustration' by Dr Janet Watson and Sharon Bradley
- 'Introducing two newly described species of *Meconopsis*' by Paul Egan TEXT
- 'Introducing two newly described species of *Meconopsis*' by Paul Egan POWERPOINT
- '*Meconopsis wilsonii* subspecies' by Prof. David Rankin

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)