

# The Meconopsis Group

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## NEWSLETTER September 2014

Dear Member,

Autumn is certainly with us now and it is hoped that you all have had a great summer and that all plants survived the vagaries of our climate!

### Important plea for volunteers

Over the years we have relied on relatively few members to run our Group and we have been very grateful to them for all they have done and are doing. As the Group has grown considerably we now need more members to enable our successful Group to continue thriving. So before giving the details of the exciting next meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> October, I would like to ask you to give serious consideration to "Secretary and volunteers role" below. We are now in need of a member or members to help the Group to continue to flourish, especially in a secretarial role. Therefore I would like to ask you think carefully about the item below on "Secretary and volunteers role".

### Arrangements for meeting to be held on Saturday October 25<sup>th</sup> 2014

**Venue;** Conference Room, Royal Botanic Garden, 20 Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH3 5LR

Tel 0131 248 2909     **Directions** available at [www.rbge.org.uk](http://www.rbge.org.uk)

**Meeting Charge** There will be a nominal charge of £1 to attend the meeting and this will include a lucky numbered ticket.

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

**Picnic Lunch** Please bring your own lunch to the meeting. Tea and coffee will be provided at 10am and again at lunchtime.

**Guests** Guests will be made very welcome at the meeting.

**New Members** Please contact Sharon if you have any difficulty  
[bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or 07910 274906

## **Agenda for meeting** (additional copy attached)

10.00 arrival teas and coffees

10.30-11.30 Christopher Grey-Wilson: *Meconopsis* Monograph, part 1 – see below

11.30-12.15 David Rankin Meconopsis – and the rest- in China.

12.15-12.30 Questions

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.30-2.30 Christopher Grey-Wilson: *Meconopsis* Monograph, part 2 – see below.

2.30- 3.15 Margaret Thorne Trip to Bhutan

3.15 Questions

**Meconopsis monograph** – To be published, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Chris Grey-Wilson will give us an overview of his new monograph on “The Genus *Meconopsis*: Blue poppies and their relatives”. This much anticipated volume is a new and complete revision of the genus on which Chris has been working for many years, and which has been published in the prestigious Kew Botanical Magazine Monograph series (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew). *Meconopsis* Group members are privileged to be able to purchase the book at a 25% discounted price of £51 until the end of November 2014, after that the discount will be reduced to 20%. Copies will be available for sale at our meeting. Also we are attaching/sending a leaflet to this effect from the Alpine Garden Society, although the end of November dead-line for the 25% offer is not included on it. The committee has agreed that the Group will pay the Post and Packing fees for the delivery of the book and arrangements will be made with the AGS to this effect.

### **Reports of talks at the meeting**

As usual these will be prepared and sent to members with the newsletter sent out in January, Chris Grey-Wilson's talks: Chris will write a summary of his overview of his important monograph.

Margaret and David Thorne: their report will be a combined one on their talk at this meeting and the two talks they gave at our last meeting in March on their trips to Bhutan.

### **Seed Exchange**

The spare seed from the 2013 Seed Exchange was packeted for Gardening Scotland. Virtually all the seed was sold and it is hoped that any surplus from this year's seed exchange will allow this to be repeated next year at Gardening Scotland 2015.

### **Seed for Autumn Sowing**

We had early donations of *M. punicea*, *M. punicea* (perennial form), *M. delavayi* and *M. quintuplinervia* and 47 batches of pre-ordered seed were sent out. Most requests were satisfied, but the six members who did not get seed of *M. delavayii* will be given priority when more seed of it is available.

## **Main Seed Exchange**

There is a request for donations of seed for the 2014 Main Seed Exchange in an accompanying letter. Please try and ensure that it is received by Ian Scott (Seed Exchange Manager) by 1st November, or give him prior warning of a late delivery of seed.

The seed list will be e-mailed to those members, for whom we have an e-mail address, in late November (details are on the seed exchange web-page).

If you would like a printed copy of the seed list for 2014/2015 can you please send a stamped SAE to: **Ian Scott, 6 Hays Road, The Galdry, Fife, DD6 8SJ**

## **Secretary and volunteers role**

Several changes have happened within the committee in the last year and the role of Secretary has evolved to allow for the increased number of members in the Group. Parts of the role have now been divided up and adopted by committee members and we are now looking for a member who would like take on the role of coordinating and administrating the information that will be supplied by everyone. This role would require someone with computer knowledge and the ability to travel to two committee meetings per year which are held at the Botanic Garden in Edinburgh. If this is of interest to you, or you may like some more information, please contact Sharon by email at [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or on 07910 274906.

Volunteers are also needed to add to our list of people to help out at meetings. The 50:50 plant stall and the Tea table can always use some extra help on the day or to perhaps cover holidays so again if you would like to help out please contact Sharon on the above details.

**Kevock Garden** Congratulations to members David and Stella Rankin for winning a Gold Medal at RHS Chelsea flower show this year. Following on from this they also were awarded 'Premier' Gold medal at Gardening Scotland. An excellent photograph of their display at Chelsea, featuring *Meconopsis*, was shown in the Financial times newspaper that weekend.

**Harperley Hall Nurseries** and Gary McDermott were also awarded a gold medal at RHS Chelsea and their *Meconopsis lingholm* was photographed and featured in another article in the Financial Times.

## **Gardening Scotland**

Once again the *Meconopsis* Group was represented at Gardening Scotland. It was an extremely busy weekend and the stand was awarded a Gold Medal. Seed sales were excellent and thanks go to Sharon Bradley and all the volunteers who spent time on the stand. Ian Scott, Seed Exchange Manager, topped up additional bags of seeds on the Saturday afternoon and all seeds were sold out by 2.30 on the Sunday afternoon. The display this year showed the plants which were given Awards of Garden Merit in 2013 and a mild spring meant that there was a good display of plants in pots. *Meconopsis* 'Lingholm' was awarded best plant in show by Gardening Leave, a charity which supports ex-servicemen.

The Group is hoping to be represented again at Gardening Scotland in 2015 as it is an excellent way to promote the Group and the plants. The theme will be *Meconopsis* Species and it is hoped that additional support from Group members could help keep the continuity of an excellent stand for 2015. This could be anything from volunteering to do a stint on the stand at

the show or assisting to set up or take down the display. All members who have helped out before always seem to enjoy themselves.

Another way to help is by perhaps growing a species plant in a big pot. Of course recognition would be given to any member who may be able to do this. The quality and timing of the plants is always down to climate and this can be so different from one side of the country to the other so we want to make sure that the stand will always have the best quality of plants on display.

If you feel you would like to be involved with Gardening Scotland please contact Sharon Bradley at [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) or write to her at 5 Collichill Road BIGGAR South Lanarkshire ML12 6PN.

## **Website**

The website is being worked on all the time although it is not always visible as to what is being done, it is slowly changing. This work will continue. Matt Heasman is working closely with Evelyn Stevens to implement the most important changes first. They think they have the layout of the pages just about done. Using more up to date software Matt has managed to keep the original pleasing layout and design, but attractively widened the pages to cater for the fact that larger monitors/screens are used these days and nearly everyone now has broadband. Matt is always open to any comments and suggestions so if someone has any niggles then please do contact him.

These changes all take time and Matt has had some challenges trying to use the old style coding and modifying to a newer style. It does take time and mistakes will be made, but with patience we will get there. Evelyn advises that they are working on the Species in the wild section at the moment.

## **Speaker suggestions for meetings.**

In order to keep the Group's meetings fresh and interesting we are looking for suggestions for Speakers for future meetings. Talks do not require to be too long so if you think that you have something that may be of interest to the members please bring it to our attention. The same if you are aware of someone who may be of interest to the members and who may be interested in doing a talk.

## **Subscriptions**

There are still a few members who may have overlooked their subscriptions for 2014. Access to the website member's area and to the seed exchange depends upon payment of subscriptions so if you don't want to be excluded from these excellent members benefits please check that you are up to date.

## **Spring meeting date**

The conference room at The Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh has been booked for the Group's AGM and meeting and this will be on **March 7<sup>th</sup> 2015.**

**Attached** Agenda and attendance slip for meeting. Seed exchange letter. AGS Monograph application.

Regards *Sharon Bradley.*