



# The Meconopsis Group

Newsletter October 2016

## Meconopsis Group Meeting to be held on Saturday, 22nd October, 2016

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

**Telephone:** 0131 248 2909 **Directions:** These are available at <http://www.rbge.org.uk/the-gardens/edinburgh/how-to-reach-us>

**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 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 group's funds. Both *Meconopsis* and other plants are welcome.

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

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

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

Programme:

- 10:00-10:30 Arrivals, Teas & Coffee
- 10:30-10:45 Chairman's Update
- 10:45-11:45 Alan Oatway – Two Nepali Monocarps
- 11:45-12:15 Kirsty Wilson – Longwood Gardens USA
- 12:15-12:30 David Rankin - The Nagoya Protocol.- An Update
- 12:30-13:30 Lunch
- 13:30-14:00 Video Presented by David Thorne
- 14:00-15:00 Ian Christie - Plant naming and Assessment committee
- 15:00-15:15 Questions/General Discussion

**Date of next meeting, AGM & Meeting, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2017.**

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[www.meconopsis.org](http://www.meconopsis.org)

Affiliated to the Scottish Rock Garden Club and supported by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

## Meconopsis Group Meeting to be held on Saturday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2016

Please note that weekend access to the RBGE conference room building has to be via the main entrance reception, through the metal gates to the left hand side of our original entry door. Notices will be displayed on the day directing members and is also marked on the photograph below.



Please contact Sharon to let us know if you can come:

- Email [bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com](mailto:bigbluepoppies@btinternet.com) **OR**
- Telephone 01899 221896 and leave a message or send a text to 07910 274906 **OR**
- By post to Sharon Bradley 5 Colliehill Road, BIGGAR, South Lanarkshire MI12 6PN

## News from the Seed Exchange

Ian D. Scott

The letter requesting donations for the 2016 Meconopsis Group seed exchange was sent out by email on 1st September, and postal members should have a copy along with this mail-shot. Although it is always very nice to have donation of rare species or varieties, it is equally important to have fresh donations of commoner ones such as *Meconopsis baileyi*. This year the Meconopsis Group benefited substantially from the sale of seed at Gardening Scotland, so all donations are important.

This spring I waited with anticipation for the first flowering of a new species, for me, namely *Meconopsis zhongdianensis* – from seed legally collected in Yunnan. It was a nice enough plant, but it looked identical to the plant currently grown as *Meconopsis racemosa*. One possible explanation could be that our current stock of *Meconopsis racemosa* probably came from the AGS China expedition (ACE) in 1994, before *Meconopsis zhongdianensis* was identified as a new species (based on ACE 883). Consequently our *Meconopsis racemosa* will become (of hort) in the seed list, until we have authenticated seed collected in Sichuan.

On a brighter note, it was most encouraging to have so many members offering to champion a particular Meconopsis species, and try to maintain a colony free from hybridisation. There are still a fair number of species, such as *M. punicea*, *M. integrifolia*, and *M. pseudo-integrifolia*, needing a champion member. If you would like to participate in this venture, then please contact me.

As a result of discussions at the last Committee meeting, I need to explain our current position with seed from named clones (e.g. 'Jim's Ex' and 'ex P.C. Abildgaard'), which have appeared in other seed exchanges. It has been the policy of the Meconopsis Group not to include such seed in the seed exchange list for a number of good reasons. The resulting seedlings will not be identical to the parent clone and, in most cases, will be inferior. In addition, there is the real possibility that, through human error, 'ex P.C. Abildgaard' becomes 'P.C. Abildgaard' on a plant label, undoing years of work by the Meconopsis Group in correctly identifying the Big Blue Poppies in cultivation. However, for a **trial period**, I have been requested to list such seed **for research purposes**.

The rationale for this decision is as follows, using 'Jim's Ex' as an example. I am told that 'Jim's Ex' is a more robust plant than its named clone parent, as well as being more fertile. These would seem to be good characteristics that a hybridizer might wish to cross against

a different Meconopsis in order to produce even better plants, which might become named clones in their own right. This would seem, to me, to fit with the aims of the Meconopsis Group as a specialist plant society. At the same time, the name 'Jim's Ex' has not been ratified by the Meconopsis Group, and consequently cannot appear on its seed list.

To overcome this apparent impasse, I propose to have such seed in a separate section of the seed list marked 'Research Seed', and identify each donation merely with a Meconopsis Group Seed number (MGS#) starting at 100. Thus, all seed originating from 'Mop-head' would be one number and seed from 'Barney's Blue' would be given a different number. Any member who required such seed, for hybridising purposes, would need to go to the seed exchange web-page to ascertain the nature and origin of MGS#100, MGS#101 etc.

#### Research Seed

16/178	MGS#100	X
16/179	MGS#101	
16/180	MGS#102	A
16/181	MGS#104	X

Example above - no donation of MGS#103 in 2016  
Orders with a 'X', alternatives with an 'A' as standard

Obviously the MGS# number initially allocated, for example, to 'Jim's Ex', could soon become a mixture of 'Jim's Ex', 'ex-Jim's Ex', ex-ex-'Jim's Ex' etc and might lose the desired genetic characteristics. This is why it is important to have a trial period and evaluation. If you wish to comment on this change, please e-mail me in the usual way.

[ianscottryvoan@btinternet.com](mailto:ianscottryvoan@btinternet.com)

Unfortunately I am unable to attend the October meeting but Sharon will take seed donations on my behalf. Please remember to write your name on the packets so that I know who has made the donation. And lastly, a polite reminder that the seed exchange is only open to members who have paid their annual subscription, which was due in January. If you are in doubt, then contact Sharon or myself.

## GARDENING SCOTLAND 2016

Sharon Bradley

Gardening Scotland was off to a good start this year with lovely sunny weather. It certainly puts everyone in a good mood when you are not trying to deliver your precious plants when the wind is howling around you.

Over the weekend the stand was very busy with seed sales exceeding £700. Visitors who have been calling at the stand for years dropped in again to let us know how they have been getting on with their seeds and plants. There were also several new members who joined on the day or sent in their application once they returned home.



The stand is an excellent showcase for the Group and a wonderful way to exhibit the plants to an admiring audience. With lots of advice from the volunteers it encourages others to have a go at growing them themselves. Several of the Nursery stands at the show came along to tell us they had a wonderful weekend and their sales of Meconopsis was greater than ever.

The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society awarded the stand a Gold Medal, the fourth Gold medal in a row and everyone who helped on the stand deserve many thanks for making it all happen.

Next year it is anticipated that the stand will be slightly larger than previous years. All going well it is hoped to launch the new book from the Alpine Garden Society, in collaboration with The Meconopsis Group, *Meconopsis for Gardeners*. This will follow on from the initial launch at Chelsea the previous week. Gardening Scotland 2017 will be from Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> of June and we will need more volunteers than normal to help out on the stand. Please put the dates in your diary and if you can help out please let me know. All volunteers get a ticket to the show so that you can have a look round before or after their stint on the stand.