

Meconopsis Group Seed Exchange Report 2016

The fine spring of 2016 was followed by one of the cloudiest summers of recent years, but most growers reported that they had reasonable amounts of seed for the seed exchange. This year there were some outstanding donations of seed collected in Yunnan and Tibet. Our grateful thanks goes out to all those who have made the seed exchange such a success.

In 2016 the number of Meconopsis items on offer was 70 compared to 56 in 2015, although 8 were seed from the previous year. However, some items were in such small quantities (3 or 4 packets) that stocks of *M. betonicifolia*, *M. x beamishii*, *M. x hybrida* and *M. pseudo-integrifolia* were soon exhausted. Perhaps at this point it is worth mentioning how incoming seed requests are dealt with.

Those members who do not use the internet have their seed list posted out a couple of days before the seed list is e-mailed out. This allows all members to respond at about the same time. Incoming requests are sorted in accordance with member priority. Those members who donate seed from rare Meconopsis species or several different Meconopsis species have the highest priority. Donations of fewer Meconopsis species or rarer companion plants (e.g. *Omphalogramma delavayi*) have a slightly lower priority, and so on. This is not to belittle a single donation of *Meconopsis baileyi*, as I still require large quantities of the commoner species for seed sales at Gardening Scotland.

With regard to companion plants, I stated last year that I was happy to list these so long as the list did not exceed the second page. Many members do not need 10 packets of Meconopsis seed, so the companion plants fulfil a useful function, and in 2015 we had 67 companion plants. This year we had 102, and if I had listed every donation it would have exceeded 130! Obviously I am always delighted to receive donations of *Paraquilegia anemonoides*, *Nomocharis pardanthina* or *Primula macrophylla*, but this year I was forced to omit commoner seed which could have been sent to other seed exchanges. Companion plants really should be choice or novel. If in doubt e-mail me.

Notable donations to the Main Seed Exchange included: *M. balangensis*; *M. betonicifolia* from Yunnan; *M. dhwojii*; *M. grandis ssp orientalis* from Cuona in Tibet; *M. x hybrida*; *M. muscicola*; *M. pseudo-integrifolia*; *M. yaoshanensis*; and *M. zhongdianensis* from Gothenburg Botanical Garden. In addition, we purchased additional seed of *M. punicea* from a UK nursery

Over 66% of the membership used the seed exchange in 2016 (60% in 2015), comprising 86 UK members, 40 non-UK members, 3 Honorary members and 4 Complementary members. The Meconopsis Group sent seed to Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Japan, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

In an attempt to guarantee the sustainability of the seed exchange, the Meconopsis Group now has a scheme whereby a group of members are attempting to maintain colonies of particular species, or forms, free from hybridisation. At present there are over 30 members participating but more are needed. Please remember that some Meconopsis plants are not large and only require a trough. Contact me if you would like to help with this initiative.

Lastly, as internet banking is rapidly replacing the personal cheque, we intend to have a Paypal option set up for the seed exchange next year. Details will be in the autumn newsletter.

Ian D. Scott
31st January 2017