

Meconopsis Group Seed Exchange - Report 2019

Firstly I would like to thank all the members who donated seed this year, especially as everyone sent in their seed using the correct postage. I suppose that every year is a challenge and it is always a great relief when the donations start arriving, even if some are at the last moment. This year we were most fortunate to be given some large donations of the less common species. Consequently I was able to be more generous in the quantity of seed per packet, and some seed has been placed in cold storage for future use.

There were some notable items on offer, such as *M. balangensis*, (grown in Scotland), *M. henrici*, *M. merakensis*; *M. pseudo-integrifolia*, *M. sinomaculata* (grown in England), and *M. yaoshanensis*. At the same time, there was no *M. x beamishii* seed available this year, and all of the *M. grandis* 'Himal Sky' came from a single donor. Currently we have about 40 donors (20% of our membership) and, considering that we are a specialised group, we should be aiming to get at least a third of our members collecting seed each year.

A total of 148 batches of seed were dispatched this year (142 in 2018), to 85 UK members, 44 non-UK members, 2 Honorary members and 6 Complementary members, plus 11 requests for additional seed. Seed was sent to Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA. Considering that our membership stands at around 200, this bodes well for the continued cultivation of the genus.

I am sorry to say that some members were confused when applying for extra seed. Anyone wanting extra seed was given their normal allocation (X and A) and their request sheet was set aside until the seed exchange had virtually closed. If the requested extra seed (E) was still available it then was added to the normal allocation and all of the seed was dispatched at the same time. This saved on the cost of postage and packaging as well as reducing our fees to PayPal.

For members requesting the normal distribution (X and A) there was no change to the payment procedure. Those requesting their normal distribution (X and A) **plus** extra seed (E) were told that they would be invoiced by e-mail for the **total** seed payment at the **end** of the process. Unfortunately some members were determined to pay for all of their seed (X, A and E) up-front, before I could determine whether the extra seed would even be available.

To fine tune the extra seed procedure, if an order form has an 'A,E' against an item, I use it as an alternative to a first preference (X), but if not required in that capacity I try to supply it as an extra packet, if still available when the seed exchange closes.

With regard to companion plants, I am happy to include these so long as the list does not exceed the second page. Many members do not need 10 packets of Meconopsis seed, so the companion plants fulfil a useful function. Companion plants really should be choice or novel, and this year we had donations of *Clintonia andrewsiana*, *Dysosma aurantiocaula*, *Lilium akkusianum*, *Primula maximowiczii*, *Roscoea tibetica* and *Saussurea gossipiphora*.

As the UK will be leaving the European Union in 2020 and new E.U. legislation will come into force which affects the U.K., the position of the seed exchange is currently unclear. I will continue to work with the AGS and SRGC seed exchanges so that we have a common purpose, with the hope that issues can be resolved in a satisfactory manner.

Ian D. Scott
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