



The Meconopsis Group

September 2018

Meconopsis Group Meeting to be held on Saturday, 20th October, 2018

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 or 07910 274906.

Programme:

10:00-10:30 Arrivals, Teas & Coffee

10:30-10:45 Jim Jermyn Chairman: 'Celebrating 20 years of The Meconopsis Group'

10:45-11:45 Alan Oatway: 'Exploring Chinese Meconopsis'

11:45-12:30 Martin Hajman: 'Meconopsis in Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden'

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-14:00 Martin Hajman: 'Meconopsis in Tromsø Arctic-Alpine Botanic Garden'

14:00-15:00 Leoni Paterson: 'Plant hunting in the RBGE Archives: trails left by Meconopsis and those who searched for her'

15:00-15:15 Pat Murphy: 'Report on the Plant Assessment Committee'

15:15-15:30 David Rankin: 'Report on DNA'

Date of next meeting, AGM & Meeting, Saturday 23rd February 2019.

www.meconopsis.org

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

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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 as marked on the photograph below.



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

- Email 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
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News from the Seed Exchange

Ian D. Scott

Firstly, a reminder to send in your seed donations by **22nd October**. Seed can be accepted after this date if a list of promised seed is sent by e-mail prior to the deadline. Likewise if you are intending to give me seed at The Meconopsis Group meeting in October, please let me have a list of your donations in advance. A seed-list will be produced in early November, posted out to those who do not have internet access, and e-mailed to all other Group members.

Secondly, a plea for members to use the appropriate postage. Last year I had five donations which could not be delivered for this reason and this year I already have another two. The first was unfortunate in that a self-adhesive stamp had come adrift from a pre-used jiffy-bag and the Royal Mail assumed that no postage had been paid. The second one had a first class stamp instead of a second class LARGE. In addition to the £1.50 penalty fee, there is the inconvenience of arranging collection each time this happens. Consequently, next year, any 'Item Underpaid' cards from the Royal Mail will, most probably, be thrown in the bin together with the member's donor status.

Now that I've had my little rant, what else is new? At the Spring Meeting I was asked about the possibility of having a seed bank for The Meconopsis Group, so that seed of the rarer species could always be available. In most years the remains from the seed exchange comprises *M. baileyi* in various forms, *M.* 'Lingholm' and *M.* 'Fertile Blue Group', which have been used for seed sales at Gardening Scotland, with requests for the rarer seed greatly exceeding the number of packets available for distribution. From time to time I have kept back a small quantity of the rarer seed for distribution in the following season, hoping to give continuity, but this seldom amounts to more than half a dozen packets.

However, this year, I have harvested a large quantity of seed from *M. integrifolia* ssp *souliei* which can be banked, and I hope to build upon this. Obviously it is the rarer species or sub-species which are being considered. Items such as *M. baileyi* or *M. napaulensis* (of hort) are not a problem and are best grown from fresh seed.

Leading on from this, there is a need to produce a 'Meconopsis Status List', rather like an endangered species list, where we can identify which plants are safely in cultivation and which need special attention, so that action can be taken. To promote the work of The Meconopsis Group I would propose to have this list on the Forum for ease of access to those who are not yet members.

Our attempt to protect and maintain the Meconopsis that we already have in cultivation by getting members to champion or sponsor a particular species has had mixed results. There have been some notable successes but some participants are no longer Meconopsis Group members (or have lost interest?). Consequently there are a number of orphans such as *Meconopsis wilsonii* ssp *wilsonii* needing foster parents. A couple of members have contacted me as they could not remember which species they had volunteered to adopt and requesting further seed as the original seed had not germinated properly. Would it be useful to have a list of species which have been adopted and, if so, should the guardian's name be attached?

Another subject of interest, arising from the Spring Meeting, was the parentage of some of the Meconopsis hybrids and the question as to whether M. 'Lingholm' could hybridise. Over late Spring I attempted to pollinate M. 'Lingholm' with *M. integrifolia* ssp *souliei* and recorded the stages of the experiment on the Meconopsis Group Forum. This is an excellent platform for promoting The Meconopsis Group to a wider public, but also provides the opportunity to discuss issues throughout the year, and not just at our two annual meetings. I urge all of our members with internet facilities to make use of the Forum if they are not doing so already.

And lastly a real stunner

Meconopsis henrici grown from Meconopsis Group seed flowered for me this year. After years of sowing seed bearing this name and never finding that it had been correctly identified, it was a delight to see this in my trough. Rich purple petals, a boss of golden stamen and dilated filaments. Many thanks to our member in Sortland for this absolute gem. Having only one flowering plant there was no viable seed set, but there are another two plants in the trough which should flower next year.

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