



AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Bob McFarlane's P. versicolor
Dwayne Dickerson

TRAVEL KIT IDEAS FOR YOUR NEXT EXPEDITION

Julie McIntosh Shapiro, Hull, Mass.

Have you ever reached into your travel pouch, fanny pack, backpack or cargo pants pocket and found you'd forgotten something? Too many times this has happened to me. I get nearing the home stretch of preparing for my trip with reservations, itinerary, foreign cash exchanges, not to mention packing, while talking to colleagues, friends and family about how exciting my trip will be, and invariably miss one important step – putting together my Expedition Kit.

This pouch, whether tucked into my backpack for easy access, or a small Ziploc bag, will carry the almighty and important articles that will keep me fed, safe, and occupied, at least for a time.

I started thinking about this semi-permanent appendage during an expedition years ago, when, out in the middle of nowhere, I found I had forgotten my compass and writing utensil. The compass, to assist in telling me where I was going (no lovely road

signs at this point), and the pencil, to jot down the characteristics of the most amazing penstemon specie. I had seen to date.

So there I was with nothing but a Nutella and peanut butter sandwich and a cell phone. Great! From then on I made certain I would give some extra time and thought to my packing, especially before a plant trip, or botanizing expedition, and remember those little items easily forgotten.

In speaking with my good friend, Larry Owens, and his wife Barbara, two seasoned APS members, I found that he knew all about this. So with a wonderful dinner of the best fish and chips and Scottish ale I have ever had, we began to discuss the makings of what one puts in an expedition kit to aid in plant hunting.

First, you need something you can get to in a pinch. If it's buried deep in your pack, no one is going to hang around while you paw through the thing searching for your signature loop, or that special Swedish sunblock. Have these and any other small particulars you may need during your day on the trail,

graspable. A fannypack (although that word still irks me), placed in the front, back or side of the body, may work perfectly. A large cargo pant pocket might be enough to handle those few items you can't live without. Sometimes a zip-off compartment of your camping pack might do just the trick in storing that pill box, lip balm, compass, or bit of change (for telephones and plant size reference while photographing).

As you can see by the photographs, both pouches are the same size measuring 8 x 12 x 5 inches deep. One of the kits is stocked with: a GPS unit, secateurs, pencil, notepad, small 6-inch ruler, measuring tape, thermometer, coins, tweezers, and a compass.

In the next photo, the kit consists of: a waterproof notepad, waterproof phone/GPS unit pouch, three bottles: lavender spray (for soothing cuts), rosemary spray (for staying alert), and tea tree oil (a disinfectant). Then you might include a notepad, a permanent marker, pencil, measuring tape, business cards, energy bar, tissues, pill box, mirror, compass, small vellum envelopes, a sunscreen stick, and last but not least, lipstick.

Rather than guessing which kit belongs to whom, suffice it to say there are many things you may find important to have with you in a moments notice while on your next APS expedition.. Spend a moment to collect them before you depart from home and keep them handy as you venture out along the trail. These small yet essential items may make your trip all the more successful.



Larry Owens



Julie McIntosh Shapiro

MEXICO 2009 APS ANNUAL MEETING SEPTEMBER 4

There is still time to register (money due by July 1) for this year's long planned annual meeting in the Sierra Madre mountains of Chihuahua, Mexico. The monsoon rains will bring into bloom many penstemons and other wonderful flora, just for our pleasure. Beautiful scenery abounds, just waiting to be captured. Your travel companions will be both knowledgeable and fun. What

more could one ask for? Oh, photos and more info? Check out our website – it's all there!

If you haven't signed up, do not despair. There is still room for you. Contact Dan Schaaf, Registration Chairman at: dlindgre@unlnotes.unl.edu or, UNL – West Central Center, 402 West State Farm Road, North Platte, NE 69101



Penstemon cardwellii Barbara Lewis,
Denver, CO

**HUNTING THE WILD
PENSTEMON
SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2009
An American Penstemon Society
Outing for All Ages
Ginny Maffitt, Sherwood, Oregon**

To actually see 10 species and natural hybrids in bloom requires a bit of driving—around 180 miles by best guess. Meeting at 8:00 am at the parking lot just west of the Troutdale TA truck stop, we'll explore the Big Lava, Washington side of the Columbia Gorge, one native plant nursery (good prices on local natives), then cross the river going south to Dufur for a magnificent display of *Penstemon speciosus*. A good road going north takes us up to Highway 35 turning west around Mt. Hood. An

optional side-trip up Lolo Pass should net us several more species, plus sightings of *Rhododendron macrophyllum* and several lily species in bloom. We'll return west on U.S. 26, and cut back to Troutdale at Gresham around dinnertime. Bring a generous lunch, snacks, drinks, camera, boots, sunscreen, hat, any reference books and weather-appropriate clothing. I'll bring the tick-spray!

If you choose to drive your own car, you may leave the group on your timetable. We'll arrange car-pooling at the meeting place, with the understanding that each driver should receive \$14 (about \$2 per 25 miles) unless gas rises before then! The drivers shall be held harmless in case of accident.

There will be handouts with information on each species we'll see, plus information on keying them out and lots of answers to questions. Likely in bloom, we should see *Penstemon cardwellii*, *barrettiae*, *serrulatus*, *subserratus*, *ovatus*, *fruticosus*, *rupicola*, *richardsonii*, *speciosus*, *euglaucus* and possibly *dauidsonii*, plus some natural hybrids.

Please let me know that you're coming, how many are in your group, and if you'd like to be a driver. Feel free to contact me for more details.

I look forward to introducing you to my favorite plant genus,
Ginny Maffitt, maffit@verizon.net



Edward Godleski in His Garden

EDWARD GODLESKI
APS AUDITOR

Val Myrick, Sonora, California

One long ago summer, while visiting Mesa Verde in Colorado, a plant sporting beautiful red trumpets caught Edward's eye. A pod of *Penstemon eatonii* was pocketed, planted and easily brought to maturity. Thus, Edward thought, "Penstemons must be easy!" and promptly joined the American Penstemon Society.

Even though Cleveland's (Zone 6) humid climate with its wet fall and spring soon proved that idea wrong, Edward hasn't lost his initial enthusiasm for the genus. Each year, out of the 200 different species of seeds planted, approximately 65 are penstemons obtained from the APS seed exchange, Ron Ratko, and SW Native Seeds.

He stratifies the seeds in his attached garage, transferring them to his basement where they flourish under eight banks of 4' florescent lights. After hardening them off, he removes their soil and plants them in one of two special beds in his stunning 100' by 75' backyard. . His 6' x 40' pea gravel bed receives the larger species while the

smaller ones are planted in his sand bed. Two-thirds live beyond a year though few make it beyond two. Ohio is tough on these western beauties.

Perhaps Edward's history will shed light on his persistence and enthusiasms. At 18, he left New Jersey for higher education in the halls of Lehigh, Cornell, and Oklahoma State. His PhD in chemical engineering brought him to Cleveland State where he retired from his position of Dean of the Undergraduate Engineering College in 1994. Upon retiring, he did not flee to Florida but continued to live in the home he has had since 1976.

Although most of us have known Edward from annual meetings of APS and NARGS, probably meeting him on a hike in the western mountains, plants are not his only passion. Music claims him too! By day he gardens and by night he attends several musical events each week. What we Penstemaniacs miss out on, and his Cleveland friends are privileged to experience, are his own concerts as a pianist. Maybe one of our meeting venues will contain a piano and we will have a chance to enjoy his music.



Edward's Sand Bed
Cleveland, Ohio

A SAD LOSS

Panayoti Kelaidis, from Penstemon-L

It is with great sadness that I inform the members of the American Penstemon Society of the passing of Cindy Nelson Nold of an apparent heart attack. She was not only Bob Nold's true love and wife of 27 years, but an award-winning artist of enormous talent not only with watercolors, but with everything she touched. She was Bob's partner in the garden, in all his endeavors. They have been contributory members of the American Penstemon Society for many years.

Ed.'s Note: A commemoration of Cindy's life was held at the Denver Botanic Gardens on May 28.



*Bob McFarlane's Seedlings
Dwayne Dickerson*

GERMINATION WHAT SEEDS ARE EASY TO GERMINATE?

Barbara Lewis, Denver, Colorado

The answer is just a click away: www.apsdev.org/blog. This article reports the findings of a survey completed by APS members. Taken together, the 20 members who

completed the survey have a combined experience of germinating a total of 203 species of penstemons! The article includes a long list of species that are easy, many of which may surprise you and give you ideas for next year's germination activities.

CREATING A CORPORATE MEMORY BANK

Your Help is Needed

Barbara Lewis, Denver, Colorado

As many of you know, through the use of surveys I am gradually constructing a picture of our sources of penstemon seeds and plants, what penstemons we members germinate, and how easy or difficult it has been to germinate our seeds – a 'corporate memory' if you will. I have reported the results of my three studies in either the *Bulletin*, in our newsletter, and/or on our website in the Blog section. It is my hope that this information will be of significant use to all those who grow penstemons.

Now I have turned my attention to your experience with the cultivation of penstemons: those we have germinated and those we have purchased as seedlings. Many of us new to growing penstemons look for guidance with this process. Though the wonderful books by Lindgren and Wilde, *Growing Penstemons* and *The Gardener's Guide to Growing Penstemons* by Way and James provide much useful information as does our growing volume of Cultivation material on the web, I feel we have not adequately tapped the experiences of all our members. I believe there is still much more to be learned. To that end I have two new goals: 1) to survey our membership and

2) to review all past Bulletins and garner members' cultivation reports (primarily from the Robin).

This article is specifically directed to achieving the first goal: to learn more about our membership's cultivation experiences using a survey form. I have constructed the form and expect that the results could help us identify where information is adequate and where it needs expansion. The results of the survey will be made available to all members.

As you probably already have guessed, I am writing this article to ask each and every one of you to complete this survey. If you have friends who grow penstemons, please ask them to complete a survey too. We need a very large number of returns to get reliable information.

A copy of the survey is included at the end of this Newsletter. If you'd rather download it from your computer, you will find it on our website blog or you can email me and I'll send the file. (blewis@iriscolorado.com).

To mail it back using the USPS:
Barbara Lewis 10918 N Sunshine Dr
Littleton CO 80125 (303-903-9278).

NEW MEMBERS

Ann Debolt, Boise, Idaho
Joanne Jones, Fort Morgan, Colorado
Susan Nyoka, Flagstaff, Arizona

2008 INTERNATIONAL ROUND ROBIN PART 2

*Edited by Ginny Maffitt, Sherwood,
Oregon*

Kari Wang, Hosle, Norway
August 8, 2008

Dear Robin friends,

It is always a joy to read the reports from all over Europe and the USA, and it is a relief that I'm not the only one to complain about the weather most of the time; either not enough snow or far too much, not enough rain or too much at one time.

We had a better winter than the last one, but spring was late and cold. Then we got very hot days and cold nights. I'm amazed how the plants that bring forth leaves manage to survive nights with -7 degrees C. I have a large woody **peony** that does this every year, and I always try to remember to cover it with an old curtain, but sometime I forget. However, next morning it looks as happy as anything and the leaves do not seem to have suffered.



P. attenuatus Barbara Lewis

So what about penstemons this year? To my big surprise and probably for Thea and Ingemar, my ***P. rupicola*** flowered very well in June, the first time I did not cover the pot up for the winter! I was so surprised; I did not even take a picture! ***P. attenuatus*** also flowered well, but

now looks a bit tired. I think I have to start again with seed from the seedpods I have. *P. globosus*, on the other hand, has really settled in and is now outgrowing its allotted space. I have already moved one piece, but I think I have to move the whole plant as it is growing over other, smaller penstemons and a beautiful **oxalis**. The two very small penstemons mentioned in my December letter survived the winter. *P. humilis var humilis* barely lived, partly because the *P. globosus* leaves covered it. *P. fruticosus v. scouleri* flowered again beautifully, but the small *P. eriantherus* did not do very well. It is, at the moment, almost covered by a large *P. cyananthus var. microphyllus*. This is so lovely I dare not move it elsewhere as it has a taproot, but I put out little bamboo sticks trying to give it a little air. *P. ramosus* is new here (seed from Sally Walker). It has been planted in one of the sunniest and warmest parts of the garden. Hopefully it will survive and flower next year. The last one to mention is *P. pinifolius*, which is back flowering well all summer.

Weather wise, we have started on the same “monsoon” weather system that we had last year. May was very dry, the drought continued into June, so much that we had a ban on watering for the first time I can remember. I wrote a letter to the community asking for permission to water with a computer-controlled drip system during the night, but they said no. So I had to carry cans of water for all my **rhododendrons**, and at one point, I was very worried about the four largest ones. They are more than 2.5 m high and rather old, so they do need a lot of water. We then got heavy rain for three days, then the hot weather returned; 30+ deg. C for more

than a week, but thankfully the ban was lifted. Now we have had “monsoon” for almost a month so my Himalayan plants are again rejoicing in the amount of water while other plants look rather dismal.

In July, I joined a group going to Rumania to look at plants in the Carpathian Mountains. It was like going 55 years back in time, to my childhood. Although there were many cars, the petrol cost almost \$2 per liter, so people cannot afford to drive around much. Out in the countryside, most of the transport was horse and cart, the conditions of the roads were quite variable, and, in many areas, the fields were not cultivated. We were told that this was due to no machinery to work the land and not enough manure, clearly a case for the EU. The trouble with Rumania is lots of corruption and black markets.

The people we met were very helpful and nice and the areas we visited were beautiful. The first place we stayed, Balea Lac, had a small hotel with about 20 rooms. There was one other hotel there, and two more under construction.

The plants in the area were at their very best; a beautiful *Aquilegia transylvanica* with large, sky-blue flowers, beautiful *Viola alpina* with small, rounded leaves and large pansy-flowers of an intense deep violet, thousands of small white *Ranunculus crenatus*, and here and there the leaves of *Callianthemum coriandrifolium*. It had flowered very early, so it was already over. We could find occasional flowers of *Primula minima* that had bloomed by the thousands, also *Soldanella pusilla* and *S. hungarica* and a few patches of *Rhododendron kotschyi*. Last, but not

least, there was *Campanula alpina*, 10-15 cm tall with large, hanging, blue bells.

The next place we visited had a slightly different flora. We went there mostly to look for *Eritrichium nanum* and the orchid, *Nigritella nigra*, but there were quiet a lot of other interesting plants too. In this place the *Campanula alpina* was slate blue-grey, not as good as the ones at Balea Lac. Most of the time, we had glorious weather, but the last two days had a bit of rain and a fabulous thunderstorm in the night that woke us all up.

To Gunne-Bert: I hope that all the rain we had last month has made it to Bromma;. I do not mind it going to you instead of us.

To Ingemar: Would you like seed of a small *Allium geyeri*, originally from the USA? It is only 10 cm tall, flowering in the summer with white flowers. A plant I find quite “architectural”, but on a small scale is *Lewisia columbiana*. It can take dry conditions and is long lasting. On a visit to Sweden many years ago, when I was first introduced to *L. columbiana*, the owner told me the plant was 45 years old.

To Thea: I would dearly like some seed of your white *P. fruticosus* v. *scouleri* ‘*Albus*’. Your pictures were stunning.

To Libby: Thank you for sending along the beautiful pictures from the Ely trip. Although I already have one son in the USA, the next one follows on Friday. He will be studying in Minneapolis for 3 years. It is a long journey and not always to get over there. I shall send an email to Val with this report attached.

To all of you, hopefully the autumn will be long and nice, with good colouring on trees and shrubs. Here, *Acer aconitifolium* has just started turning to red.

Kari

Ingemar Bjork, Huddinge, Sweden
25 August, 2008

Dear Robin friends,
As usual I found it very stimulating to read all your interesting letters. Libby, it was interesting to read about the meeting in Ely, a place that my wife and I visited many years ago. Unfortunately we had to abandon a visit to Great Basin NP due to a heavy snowfall. However, I found the trip along route 50 very interesting, and as a consequence the great Basin area has inspired me quite a lot in my gardening activities.

Kari, I share your opinion that *Lewisia columbiana* accepts very dry conditions. My single plant has survived at least 25 years in my very dry garden. (Ed. note: It is native to the Pacific NW—sometimes seen growing in slight depressions on huge boulders.) Unfortunately I don’t find the other *Lewisia* species except *L. pygmaea* easy to grow in dry conditions. I look forward to getting some seeds of your *Allium geyeri*.

Thea, I read with interest about the crazy weather in Germany. I would say that you also summarize the Swedish weather very well. I find it interesting that also you have started to grow more xeric plants due to the weather situation. Did you have to remake any beds or was

the original drainage good enough? It will be nice to get some seeds of *Erigeron subtrinervis*.

My report: This year the winter lasted just one week, when the temperature fell to -10 deg.C. During the remaining period, December thru March, the temperature didn't fall below +5 deg. C, and so we didn't have any snow cover. I was a bit concerned about how lacking winter would influence my penstemon seed germination. As usual, my seeds were sown mid January in moist towels put in poly bags on my glazed balcony. Comparing the 2008 germination with 2007, I see some obvious differences.



Penstemon speciosus; Showy Penstemon
© Br. Alfred Brousseau, Saint Mary's College

For species such as *P. albertinus*, *barrettiae*, *cyaneus*, *speciosus*, *strictus* and *venustus*, it decreased from 40-70% to 0-30%. All those should give further germination after a second cold period. I do not intend to check that however, as I always discard the towels a few months after the first cold period. As a contrast, some woody species as *P. davidsonii*, *cardwellii*, *fruticosus*, *newberryi* and *rupicola* germinated quite well this year. (Ed. note: can't resist pointing out the last 5 plus *P. barrettiae* are all *Subgenus Dasanthera* species which aren't subject to long periods of bitter cold in the

PNW, while their Rocky Mountain members *P. lyallii*, *ellipticus* and *montanus* need longer spells to germinate).

The 2008 summer on Uto started with a two-month period with less than one inch of rain. Even if it was cooler on Uto than in Stockholm and Huddinge, it was, in my opinion, uncomfortably hot. Luckily the weather was much more appreciated by my *opuntia cacti*. On several occasions, I could look at the same time at yellow; lime yellow, orange and red flowering plants. *Asclepias tuberosa* with its orange flowers and *Zauschneria garrettii* with its scarlet flowers also made a good show. I have earlier compared this small part of my garden with a typical Californian desert.

Outside this area I have 2 scree beds that were built in 1983. They were intended for growing European alpine plants. Except for a few *dianthus* cushions, the original purpose doesn't seem possible anymore. This is probably due to a maximum summer temp. several degrees higher than 25 years ago. A few years ago, I planted a few *Penstemon virens* in the half shade of a pine in one of the scree beds. These have clearly demonstrated that they don't appreciate their position. One *P. fruticosus ssp serratus 'Holly'* planted in 1997 gave up last year. It will not be replaced. I have come to the conclusion that this dry part of my garden isn't the best place for the woody penstemons. I will try to grow them in more shady sites.

About 3 years ago, I planted out, without any additional soil, *P. serrulatus* and *whippleanus* in a sparsely wooded (coniferous), shaded area. The

P. serrulatus have started to establish themselves, but I don't expect a lot of flowers. The white and purple flowers are a nice complement to existing vegetation. The *P. whippleanus* have disappeared; perhaps the site was too dry for them. (Ed. Note: *P. whippleanus* will only grow in coarse sand and full sun in the PNW.) *P. fruticosus* was probably at the end of its life cycle at age 10).

Now to the woody penstemons: Three years ago, I started to create a new "alpine area" on the steep half-shady western side of a rocky ridge 1-2 m tall—an impressive site. All the planted species such as *Trillium hibbersonii*, *T. pusillum*, *Saxifragas* (including *Kabschias* and *Englerias*) and *Primula marginata* have shown their full appreciation of the area even during long, dry periods. The main reason is probably that the primary limestone ridge has several vertical and horizontal fissures. These allow the plants to develop the deep root run they need in their natural environments.

Last fall I planted the first woody pents: two *P. fruticosus v. scouleri* 'Albus'. This year I have planted two *P. davidsonii v menziesii* and two *P. newberryi*. All are in good condition and are trying to quickly fill available spaces. Next, I'll plant the remaining available woody species, particularly *P. newberryi*, *rupicola* and a red-flowered hybrid. If necessary, I will provide the area with a drip watering system.

We got heavy summer rains (2-4"). This presented no serious problem to any plants including the *opuntias*. Due to the slope of the garden area, superfluous

water quickly runs off. However, this water flows along the easiest path—unfortunately, our descending (8 meter long) dirt road. The last three years, we have experienced destructive flash floods we had never seen before.

Happy Gardening to all Robin friends,
Ingemar Bjork

Gunne-Bert Wedell, Bromma, Sweden
22 Sept. 2008

Dear Robin friends,
Once again a summer has gone with its ups and downs. The winter was warm and dry, with no real cold. Without frost in the earth, our clay soils are very hard and compact, which gives bad growing conditions. Together with the dryness, the spring flowers didn't show their best and the trillium once again gave less flowering than normal.

At the end of March, we had to go 400 km south to our house in Nybro to do some work. The trip was nice on a sunny day, but the next morning, we had 3 dm (12") of snow and the next week gave the only real winter with temps down to -10C. Spring was mostly cold and dry with sporadic night frost until mid-May.

I have had few penstemons in the garden this year. Only *P. serrulatus*, *pinifolius* and *fruticosus v. scouleri* 'Albus' flowered. *P. serrulatus* has become a little weedy and self-sows everywhere.

The varied summer weather has excited many spring flowers to start up a new flowering; it will be interesting to see what next spring will bring us.

Thanks, Libby, for the nice report from the Ely meeting and for nice pictures from the trip. Many memories were awakened of our trips around the Rockies, with all those varying landscapes and plants that met our eyes when we traveled there.

Thea, sorry about this late weather report for this year, but I understand that you too have had another different spring and summer. Thanks for the nice report from Erzgebirge. Surely there are many wonderful 'Czech' gardens. They are very good growers with special interest in alpiners.

Kari, thanks for your nice donation of rain. Some drops spilled over to me, but sadly not too much. July had a good rain and it was welcome, but most clouds were empty when passing Bromma. Your report from Rumania is interesting. There are many beautiful plants growing there, but many of them are not easy to grow in Bromma.

Jill, as usual your report from your 'Eden' is nice to read for me living in a different climate. It must be wonderful to garden in your place. I have seen that redwood tree with the 'car tunnel'. It is a reality, but not good for the tree. Up in Yosemite NP, there is an old *sequoiadendron* tree with such a tunnel made in 1881, but this tree is long dead. When I visited it in 1990, there was only a 15 meter-high trunk left of it. Surely these trees give a feeling of old times. Some of them are more than 2000 years old and were grown trees when our calendar started.

Mike, I'm glad to hear that you'll be a member in this robin. You are very welcome.

Best wishes for a good winter and a perfect gardening year.
Gunne-Bert

Jill Pittman, Portland, UK
October, 2008

PORTLAND PONDERINGS:

'A Quart in a Pint Pot'

We are told Mews Cottage' garden is a quarter of an acre—to me it seems less than half of that size!!!

At the end of 2007, the garden (and the Pitmans) were feeling somewhat tired. Peter had been in the wars and was held together with a titanium plate and four screws in his back. Jill had suffered a leg ulcer that resulted in twelve weeks being bound up to the knee and barred from gardening—what a pair.

With the permission of the NGS County Organizer, it was decided that we would not open the garden in 2008, but we would do our best to turn the whole thing around to show off the National collection of Hybrid Penstemons (over 200), also about 70 species grown from American Penstemon Society seed, also many beauties from the Southern Hemisphere, plus a large collection of Agapanthus (107) at last count!

I drew up a plan of action—it was decided to start on the 'pear-shaped' piece in front of the conservatory windows. Peter and self worked hard to get this finished in time for the two groups booked for July. Our visitors

may get a garden fork instead of a cup and tea with Peter's cake if the weather is against us. We have had a chap with a little digger in to shift the large stones and move them back. The stone we estimated to weight half a ton was actually half way down in the ground. A good job, we had a digger! There is more to this gardening lark than meets the eye.

This area was edged with some 2000 *Nerine bowdenii*; we have some good friends who kindly accepted large boxes of the bulbs. One couple's Christmas card bore the note, "We spent four days planting the nerines!" There were still quite a lot to move! Abbotsbury Gardens were next on the list with Kingston Maurward College close behind. Then I remembered Athelhampton who actually saved the situation and accepted the remaining 200 plus.

The landscape contractor did a splendid job of building the raised bed for the hardy orchids and they have surprised everyone who has visited. It is now August 1, and the *roscoea* are still coming into flower. The *bletilla* **orchids** are now showing signs of repeat flowering, which is a surprise. The **epipactis orchids** were splendid and increased well. They are now producing seedpods. I will have to look them up to see if it is possible to produce plants of them from the seed.

The 'pear-shaped' piece of bed was cleared and replanted with **hybrid penstemons**. The rope edging was removed and Peter created an edge of wood bark slices that looks very effective. In fact, now all the separate areas have the same edging. A Portland stone birdbath was discovered under a

holly tree and now has pride of place in the center of the pear-shape.

The new penstemon beds are now planted. The **hellebores** have been moved and the variegated laurel is gone. Lo and behold, a new planting spot for a few more hellebores has appeared!

The pond has been sorted to some extent. A friend who goes to Norfolk brought us back some Norfolk Flints. These are natural stone. The large majority of houses in Norfolk are built of these stones which have been pitched off to expose the inside piece of black flint. Our stones, however, were complete, each with a hole in the middle through which Peter managed to jiggle the end of the pump. It now bubbles beautifully through the hold looking very natural.

Nearly finished—just some gravel to go down on yesterday's extension to the crevice area.

Jill Pitman, Sept. 23, 2008

Added note Oct. 21, 2008

I am a relatively new member and an even newer 'Robin', but I would guess there are enough pieces to put into a book now?? It would make fascinating reading and may even make some cash for the APS! Jill

Jill's note also wondered where the Robin had gone from January to July. Mea culpa, please, I think I am the culprit who sent it from her to Val to put in the new newsletter. I assumed a copy had continued on to the next person on the list, as best I remember! In trying to be current and seasonal with the Robins,

we missed that link in its rounds. It seems that Libby has it organized now for success.

Ginny Maffitt, Robin Editor, Dec. 17, 2008

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