

# AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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May 2008



*Northern White River Valley Steve Caicco*

## Ely Update

*By Bob Pennington, Santa Fe, NM*

It is time for an update on the Ely Adventure, taking place June 13,14,15. We have gotten in about 80 registrants so far, which I think means things are moving along quite rapidly. The weather has been fortuitous around the Ely area with above average snowfall. The results are already showing as high floral displays in the warmer areas. Ely ought to be nothing short of spectacular in its own way this year.

As to the program, Loraine Yeatts of the Denver Botanic Gardens will be presenting a terrific production, with the able assistance of Dwayne Dickerson at the video controls, on technical aspects of keying out plants, specifically Penstemons of course. It will enable all of us who will be in the field for the next few days to more accurately figure out what we are looking at, with positive identification the goal. Dr. Noel Holmgren, considered by many to be the “Modern Godfather of

Penstemons” will be talking to us about his experiences and discoveries in the Ely area. An extra treat is that Dr. James Reveal, accorded the same honorific as Noel in the field of Eriogonums, will likewise be in attendance! At this time we can only imagine what the synergy of these two taxonomic legends will produce. In addition, one of the program planners, Steve Caicco, a field botanist who has been working in the Great Basin for years, will lead trips in the area of his expertise, the White River Basin, and will talk to us about the topic of endemism, or the plethora of rare plants in the area.



*Penstemon confusus Steve Caicco*

One of the activities we will be incorporating into this year's meeting will be digital slide shows based on what we see on the road to Ely. Take lots of digital pictures on the way so that we can all share a much larger botanical feast. This ought to be a truly fantastic floral experience.



*Penstemon barnebyi* N. Holmgren

Steve Caicco

### ***Penstemon barnebyi* N. Holmgren**

By Steve Caicco, Nevada

Those of you attending the upcoming 2008 annual APS meeting in Ely, Nevada, will have the opportunity to see this member of the Section *Cristati* in its native habitat. Keck considered this to be a small-flowered form of a wider ranging *Penstemon miser*; while he noted the “startling contrast” in floral variation the 14 specimens he examined, they did not provide sufficient evidence of a geographic pattern that would allow him to make further taxonomic distinctions. In 1979, Dr. Noel Holmgren published a reexamination of *P. miser* based on 81 specimens in which he concluded that the floral variation in Keck's *P. miser* represented three closely-related species, *P. barnebyi*, *P. janishiae*, and *P. miser*, each with distinctive floral morphology and geographic range.

*Penstemon barnebyi*, with corollas 18-28 mm in length, has the smallest flowers of the three taxa and occurs only in southern White Pine and Lincoln

Counties, Nevada. The flowers, although small, on close examination, are strikingly colorful. The corollas expand abruptly both to the sides and below (i.e., ventricose-ampliate). The corolla tube is yellow and glandular-pubescent externally, while the palate is pale yellow to densely brownish-yellow beaded. The inside of the throat is white with red-violet guidelines. The lower lobes of the corolla, which are reflexed, are violet with blue toward the tips of the lobes. The staminode is conspicuously exerted, coiled at the tip, and densely orange-yellow bearded. They are borne in a narrow thyrse in 3 to 6 verticillasters on suberect to erect stems rising to 20 or 30 cm from a branched caudex arising from a taproot. The basal leaves are 2 to 5 cm in length and 4 to 10 mm broad.

The habitat of *Penstemon barnebyi* is typically alluvial gravels or silts derived from calcareous substrates within sagebrush and pinyon-juniper communities. The closely-related *P. janishiae*, the largest-flowered of Keck's *P. miser* with corollas 18-28 mm in length, grows on clays derived from volcanic rocks. Based on collections in the Intermountain Flora Virtual Herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden, *P. barnebyi* and *P. janishiae* come within 20 miles of one another along the western border of White Pine County.

In his original description of *Penstemon barnebyi*, Dr. Holmgren notes that during discussions about the Intermountain flora nearly 14 years prior, Rupert Barneby pointed out the dissimilarities between the two *Penstemon* that are now known as *P. barnebyi* and *P. janishiae*. It was in commemoration of many such “enlightening” discussions that he named the species in his honor, noting that Barneby's “vast knowledge, intellect, enthusiasm, insatiable curiosity, boundless energy and keen sense of humor have been a constant source of inspiration and help.”

I have no personal experience with, or knowledge of, *Penstemon barnebyi* in cultivation. Lindgren and Wilde (2003) state that it has not been reported in cultivation. Nold (1999) believed it “not worth

growing in the garden.” My personal opinion is that it would be a fine addition to an elevated trough where one could appreciate the subtlety of its coloration.

*Editor's Note: Learn more about the flora in the Ely area by visiting Steve's website, [http://web.mac.com/slcaicco/Planet\\_Plants/Planet\\_Plants.html](http://web.mac.com/slcaicco/Planet_Plants/Planet_Plants.html). For you butterfly lovers, Larry Owens of Tacoma, Washington writes that he did a search at [www.butterfliesandmoths.org/maps](http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/maps) and discovered there are 114 butterfly varieties in White Pine County!*

## EASTERN NEVADA OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PAST

*From Louise Parsons, Corvallis, Oregon*

*Excerpt from the "Robins" portion of the APS Bulletin, number 58-2 (Summer 1999), written by the late Ramona Osburn, Jacksonville, Oregon, February, 1999*

One area in eastern Nevada that I have enjoyed visiting is on a road that begins about 37 miles west of Ely. The road goes to the Historic Ruins at the old silver mining town of Hamilton. There is a Hamilton sign on Highway 50. Immediately after passing the road to the Illipah Reservoir on the left, park the car along the road and walk to the limestone outcrop a few hundred feet to the left of the road. *Lepidium nanum* and other treasures grow there. Along the road itself is *Scutellaria nana* v. *sapphirina*, growing in the gravel. It is about 3 or 4 inches high. Alplains Seeds carried it in 1996 but not since. The catalogue describes it as having royal blue flowers. Unfortunately my seeds didn't germinate. The seed should not be buried and needs 4 weeks of cold stratification.

Between the road and the limestone outcrop grows *Penstemon thompsoniae*, a favorite of mine, and a *Calylophus* which I think is *lavandulifolius*. On down the road towards the ruins are *Penstemon eatonii*, *palmeri*, *speciosus* dwarf form (formerly *kennedyi*), *pachyphyllus*, *wilcoxii* or *watsonii* (tall with blue-purple flowers), and a small dusty pink one, so far unidentified. The ruins themselves are fascinating, composed of a beautiful white limestone. I imagine the limestone is off-limits to collecting. The area from there south looks promising, but I haven't had the opportunity to explore it. I've never been to the Ruby Mountains, either, another great area according to Shirley Backman.

## BECAUSE EVERY DROP COUNTS

*By Dwayne Dickerson, Denver, Colorado*

*It's really coming down,  
Raining cats and hounds . . .  
The rain will start to fall  
It's April after all  
April after all- Ron Sexsmith*

Growing up in the Midwest, one can drive from Kansas City to Chicago, miles measured in the slap of windshield wipers. The sodden skies often don't part all week. Here in the west, a good rain may be five miles wide and one can often see the sun glimmering off wet roads ahead while driving into the leading edge of a storm front. To say it is raining in northern Nevada may mean it is raining somewhere between Reno and Wendover.

The Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network, or CoCoRaHS based at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins, tries to record as many drops as possible by enrolling thousand of citizen reporters across the United States. They empty their rain gauges every day and log on or call in if for no other reason to report 0.0" precipitation, today. They ignore humidity, dew points, wind speed and direction. Only precipitation matters.

An APS and NARGS friend Sally Boyson introduced the site to me years ago and I have been logging on ever since.

When we began planning our annual trip to Ely, the committee hoped the moisture would be good so that we'd have lots of flowers. If you look at the website at [www.cocorahs.org](http://www.cocorahs.org), you will notice that White Pine County may have 21 endemic penstemons, but not a single reporting station across its 100 mile width. Radar maps may indicate precipitation, but they won't tell how many inches fell along the roadside crossing Sacramento Pass.

All you need to participate is a high quality rain gauge available at the site for less than \$30 and a reporting station assigned by the CoCoRaHS administrator. Then you need a mounting post away from overhanging trees or a building which may create a rain shadow and you are ready to begin reporting. There is an excellent slide show on the website to help you get started.

Every drop counts and it is a huge help if there is someone onsite to report it.

## PANAYOTI CULTIVATES PENSTEMANIA

*By Val Myrick, Sonora, California*

Panayoti Kelaidis, Director of Outreach at the Denver Botanic Garden, had his "Penstemon Pizzazz" article appear in the April issue of *Garden Design*. His informative article contained wonderful photos of *Penstemon palmeri*, *P. wrightii*, *P.xMexicali* 'Red Rocks', *P. smallii*, and *P. campanulatus*. APS even got a plug in the Sourcebook section of the magazine.

## DIGGING DEEPER

*By Barbara Lewis, Littleton, Colorado*

### What this is about ?

As you probably know, the American Penstemon Society (APS) interviewed a number of their members in 2007 to learn more about what they wanted from APS. One idea came up repeatedly: *to feature one penstemon in depth in each issue of the Bulletin*.

We will try to meet this need using both printed and electronic mediums. Here's how it will work.

How it will work online? The APS Blog (look for it on [www.apsdev.org](http://www.apsdev.org)) will identify a single penstemon and invite discussion about this selected penstemon for one month. This will be accomplished by initiating a **Post** asking for input in the form of **Comments**. The Blog itself has directions on how to make **Comments**.

We will be asking people making **Comments** to first identify in what part of the country they had cultivation experience with the "Digging Deeper" penstemon-of-the-month, and then to offer their experiences, comments and questions.

If you are not sure how to do it, email me: [blewis@iriscolorado.com](mailto:blewis@iriscolorado.com)

### Who is invited to make comments online? Will they be screened?

Anyone wishing to make comments is invited to do so. Please be aware that Comments are read before they are published in order to screen for inappropriate material.

After one month that information will be removed and another penstemon will be discussed. After one month of discussion and removal from "**Digging Deeper**", the discussion pertaining to that penstemon will be

summarized both online in the Cultivation Tab section of the website and, if there is enough space, in the Newsletter or the yearly Bulletin.

When will "Digging Deeper" begin? Look for it in July 2008.

What penstemon will be featured July-September 2008?

### DIGGING DEEPER

Species #1: *Penstemon pachyphyllus*

Genus *Penstemon*

Subgenus *Penstemon*

Section *Coerulei*

Name of species: *Penstemon pachyphyllus*

Varieties: *congestus* and *mucronatus*



*P pachyphyllus* v *congestus* James Swayne

What if I would like to participate, but do not want to use the computer?

No problem, just write out your comments and send them to me:

Barbara Lewis  
10918 Sunshine Drive  
Littleton, CO 80125

## 2007 SEED EXCHANGE REPORT

By Louise Parsons, Corvallis, Oregon

We wish to thank all donors who contributed to an impressive list. Without their active support, our SeedExchange wouldn't exist. Twenty-seven donors contributed 202 different lots of seed. Ninety-four different species and varieties and 38 diverse hybrids were contributed. Forty-eight people requested seed. Of course we would like to see more folks taking advantage of this wonderful resource.

I want to especially thank Ginny Maffit for the tremendous work of receiving the donations and compiling the list. She and friends did a great deal of the packaging and labeling also. Both of us thank Bob and Phoebe McFarlane for passing along their wisdom and the wonderful gear for packaging and storing APS seed.

We are considering going back to a later deadline for the submission of seed. One possibility is to return to the traditional date of December 1. Another would be to split the difference and move it to mid-November. The deadline for submissions for the '07 exchange was November 1. A few pros and cons: Having an earlier deadline puts seeds into everyone's hands a little sooner. This is good for those in milder climates with limited opportunity for requisite cold conditioning.

A note for those living in milder climates: Seed that does not receive enough cold conditioning germinates well after a second winter. Pots or flats of ungerminated seed do not need a lot of fuss over the summer. Just place them in a cool spot such as the north side of a building and water only occasionally. An earlier deadline provides less opportunity for donors to clean, package, and mail seed. This gives less chance for including late-ripening seed. We welcome input on this or any seedlist matter. Feel free to e-mail me (Louise) at [parsonl@peak.org](mailto:parsonl@peak.org). Note that this e-mail "butchers" my last name. Copy and paste or copy it carefully.

There were some concerns expressed about the small font used for the seed list. I am very sympathetic and will do my best to resolve this. Apparently a few members either did not receive all of the seed lists or they overlooked one of the three files. We endeavor to resolve this also. Suggestions are always welcome. Don't forget that the seed list is on our new webpage and will be from now on.

If any of you have an opportunity to promote APS membership at a plant or garden event, I am always willing to mail you some packets of surplus seed suitable for beginners to hand out. If you plan to give a talk about penstemon in any venue that might include "growing interests", it is nice to promote APS and share some seed. E-mail me or send a card to: Louise Parsons, 1915 SE Stone Street, Corvallis, Oregon US 97333. Don't forget to include your address.

Donors were generous and supplies were good. However there are some species that ran short. If you have access to any of the following, please plan to gather and contribute seed. *P. ambiguus*, *albidus*, *amphorellae*, *arenicola*, *californicus*, *coccineus* (very low),  *davidsonii v. davidsonii* and *d. v. praeteritus* (Steens and Pueblo Mts., OR endemic, but locally abundant), *dolius* (maybe this can be "staked-out" in Nevada and collected by locals), *eriantherus*, *fremontii* (very low), *glandulosis v. chelanensis*, *hartweggii*, *harvardii* (many requests!), *humilis*, *janishiae*, *newberryi*, *penlandi*, *purpusii*, *rupicola*, *serrulatus* 'Super' form, and *subglaber*. I encourage you to peruse the list for any other wants not met this year. Let me know of them and we will send out a call this summer when we remind folks to gather seed. I will repeat an updated want-list at that time.

## OPERATING BUDGET FOR 2008

*By Bob McFarlane, Denver, Colorado*

Our operating budget for this year amounts to \$14,200 in income and \$12,425 in expense which would add about \$1800 to our Treasury. The highlights are as follows,

| Item       | Income<br>\$ | Expense<br>\$ |
|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Membership | 5000         | 800           |
| Seed Ex.   | 800          | 500           |
| Ann. Meet. | 7500         | 5625          |
| Bulletin   |              | 1600          |
| Newsletter |              | 1500          |
| Website    |              | 600           |
| Projects   |              |               |
| Seed Photo |              | 200           |
| Unspecif.  |              | 600           |
| Bank/other | <u>900</u>   | <u>200</u>    |
| Totals     | 14,200       | 12,425        |

Our revenues are primarily from membership dues, seed exchange sales, annual meeting registrations and bank interest. We should see a sizable increase in membership revenues because of the dues increase. The annual meeting is usually close to a break-even event although we are forecasting a small profit - part of which may be needed to adequately scope out future meetings.

Expenses are forecast a little higher in several categories but overall they are slightly lower than last year because of lower publication costs. Last year we published two issues of the Bulletin and the Cultivar Booklet. This increased our publication costs by about \$3000 over our plan for 2008 which calls for only one issue of the Bulletin.

We have allocated some funds for new projects which are of benefit to our membership. So far we have just started on one by Julie MacIntosh Shipiro to photograph penstemon seeds to determine if they might be an aid in plant identification - particularly in the fall.

## PENSTEMON SOURCE UPDATE

Please add Harlequin's Gardens, Boulder, Colorado, 303 939-9404, [www.harlequingardens.com](http://www.harlequingardens.com) to your list of retail nurseries carrying a large selection of penstemons. Mikl Brawner, an APS member, is the proprietor.

## ROUND ROBIN MOVES TO NEW HOME

The Round Robin has moved to our new website, [www.apsDEV.org](http://www.apsDEV.org). This move will enable the Round Robin members to correspond in a more free and timely manner.

## INTERNATIONAL ROUND ROBIN

*Edited by Ginny Maffitt*

*Kari Wang  
Hosle, Norway  
April 12, 2007*

We have had the wettest summer on record after a rather nice spring, and I think most of my plants, apart from those from the Himalayas, have not enjoyed the weather after the middle of June.

During the summer, I noted what happened to my Pents and I can report the following: *Penstemon barbatus*, *P. humilis*, and *P. mensarum* have all disappeared. *Penstemon globosus* (NNS03-4) flowered beautifully in June, before we got all the rain, so did *Penstemon fruticosus* v. *scouleri* (AGCBC seed from 2001). These plants have very narrow, serrate leaves and large sky coloured flowers. Unfortunately, the weather turned very hot so the flowers did not last very long. *Penstemon attenuatus* (NNS -176/96 sown in 1999) also flowered well at the end of June, but *P. rupicola* in its pot did not flower although it looked fine and

still dos. *Penstemon humilis* var. *humilis* and *heterodoxus* var. *heterodoxus* from Ron Ratko survived, losing most of their leaves, but never flowered.

That's all I have to report about Pents. We have had a very busy year traveling. In my last letter we were about to leave for France, to visit an area called Vercors, just south of Grenoble. This turned out to be a wonderful area for flowers, and we were very lucky with the weather. Two days we spent in the mountains, the first one walking from 1600 m up to 2100 m looking particularly for *Daphne cneorum*. What we were not prepared for was thousands of *Dactylorhiza sambucina* in both red and yellow, everywhere. We also found *Gentiana clusii*, *Tulipa sylvestris*, *Narcissus poeticus*, *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, *Ranunculus pyrenaicus*, *Dousglasia vitaliana*, and, of course, the *Daphne*, and a few other interesting smaller things. This area is grazed in the summer, by cows, sheep, and goats. It is a National Park and very popular for walks.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and good gardening in 2008.

*Libby Wheeler  
Fayetteville, Arkansas  
August 18, 2007*

How much fun it is to get the robin and learn what is going on in the gardening world.

I have nothing to brag about in my garden this year. We had a very warm March, which prompted plants to leaf out several weeks earlier than usual. And then on Easter Sunday in April, it was 16 degrees F here (-9C, I think), and the newly-leafed, tender plants were severely damaged by the sudden freeze. Especially azaleas, crape myrtles, Japanese maples and hickory trees suffered, and I think most of the azaleas in my yard are dead, although some of the plants are still green. The bark just popped off the

stems, something I'd never seen before. And because of the April freeze, many berries in the wild didn't materialize, which caused black bears in the national forests to roam. And one ended up looking for food in my backyard in the middle of Fayetteville!

My penstemons were hardy enough to survive the bad weather, but I don't really have enough plants to make a good show. As always, *P. tenuis*, *P. digitalis*, and *P. arkansanus* grew well as did the Husker's Red and Pike's Peak hybrids. And my *P. angustifolius* bloomed beautifully and then died.

In June, I joined Ellen Wilde for a trip to the APS meeting in Idaho. We were fortunate that the weather was good (it got very hot in July in Idaho with forest fires) and that so many wildflowers were in bloom. On our way to the meeting, Ellen and I went to the Denver Botanical Garden, the Cheyenne Botanical Garden, and to Craters of the Moon National Monument. Out of the desolate volcanic rock at Craters of the Moon grew wonderful stands of mock orange, tiny *mimulus*, *chaenactis*, and *eriogonum*.

In Stanley, Idaho, in the Sawtooth Mountains, we met up with about 50 other Penstemon Society members. We caravanned around the area with our picnic lunches and saw many wildflowers. We went on to Ketchum, stopping often to hike and take flower pictures before dinner and a tour of the Sawtooth Botanical Garden. Andrea Wolfe gave an update on her work on penstemons at the molecular level, which might result in some reclassification in the genus. Then it was on to Mackay, Idaho, via the Copper Basin, a spectacular dry mountain area, where we saw a bear, elk, a waterfall, and many wildflowers. Some of the penstemons seen on this trip were *P. virens*, *rybergii*, *venustus*, *deustus*, *proserus*, *globosus*, *cyaneus*, *laxus*, *fruticosus*, *leonardii*, *humilis*, *payettensis*, and *montanus*. My problem was that most of these penstemons were various shades of blue, which made identifications difficult for a novice. The Penstemon Society is

composed of very nice people, which made for a satisfying and most pleasant trip.

In my Northwest Arkansas area, the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks continues to develop, and this summer there are educational programs for school children. The big problem is deer, which have eaten much of the planted vegetable garden. But the eight demonstration gardens (native plant, sensory, herb, rose, children's Japanese, shade, and ?) are developing nicely, and I enjoy working in the children's garden occasionally.

*Thea Unzner*  
*Schoneiche, Germany*  
*September 30, 2007*

Libby Wheeler gave me the Robin letters, when she came to visit me with Ellen Wilde at the end of August. We had a very nice time with each other, I showed them a little of our village Schoneiche and we were sitting at the only warm sunny day in my garden under the big linden tree with coffee, apple tart, and plum cake.

Time for Penstemons was over, but we discovered in some flower arrangements in the streets of Munich some deep red Penstemon hybrids and later we saw the same hybrids also in the flower borders of the "Old Botanic Garden". In my own garden there were only some of the Mexican hybrids in bloom, but only a few, I think, it's too cool and wet for them.

In May and June my garden was full with Penstemons, particularly with the *barbatus* hybrids. *Penstemon ovatus*, *procerus*, *pruinusus*, *whippleanus*, *hirsutus*, *arkansanus*, *serrulatus* made it like all years very well, *P. tubaeiflorus* came up again only with one stem and also with *P. venustus* I have no success. But *Penstemon digitalis* spread out everywhere in the garden and when it is blooming, all is white with a shimmer of violet.

I have grown some new Penstemons from seeds, but all seedlings don't look so well because of the cold and wet weather.

*Ingemar Bjork  
Huddinge, Sweden  
December 17, 2007*

Libby – It was very interesting to read about your trip to the meeting in Idaho. My wife and I visited Crater of the Moon, Lost River, and MacKay many years ago. I have a few slides which reminds me about the curious behavior of the Lost River. I still, remember, with some frustration, an interesting gorge about one hour drive from Mackay. There I took several photos of *Kelseya uniflora* just to realize, when we were back to the motel in Mackay, that I had photographed the much more common *Petrophytum caespitosum*. We didn't return to the gorge to repair the mistake.

Thea – Also my experience of *Penstemon rupicola* is so far unsatisfying. First of all, I have never managed to achieve more than 10 – 15% germination with wild collected seeds compared to 40 – 90% with garden seeds. I have to make some further seed sowing tests to find a satisfactory explanation to the difference. My experience of growing *P. rupicola* is practically nil. In our former Huddinge garden I was, however, growing other woody species of interest as *P. newberryi* v *newberryi*, *P. newberryi* v *sonomensis*, *P. davidsonii* v *menziesii* and *P. red flowered hybrid* (similar to *P. rupicola*). I found all of them very easy to grow and flower. The main reason for that was probably the planting between vertical slabs a few cm apart allowing them a deep root run. Another important reason was probably, that the roots had access to (periodically) trickling water by means of an underground watering system.

I have earlier mentioned that I don't have a formal garden but just a piece of natural land of which the main part is bare rock. Since the gardening start

many years ago I realized that I should accept the following natural species as my key plants in my non-garden rocky area.

**Ferns:** *Cystopteris fragilis*, *Woodsia ilvensis*, *Asplenium trichomanes*, *A. septentrionale*, *A. rutamuraria* (just a handful) and probably one or two *Asplenium* hybrids. In my opinion there is nothing more beautiful than those small ferns.

**Other species:** *Allium schoenoprasum* (hundreds) and *Saxifraga granulata*. Even if it is "common", I consider the *Allium* indispensable. I have also realized that my small variety of *Erigeron compositus* by successful self sowing now aspires to be a new (and very much appreciated) member of my key plants. Also *Euphorbia myrsinites* has started a similar action.

When looking at the rest of my introduced plants, I have found that I have just on or two of each species. Instead of introducing more species, I will now concentrate upon duplicating species that have proved their adaptability. Three such species are *Alyssum pulvinare*, *Globularia pseudonana*, and *Paronychia argentea*. All accept full sun, are quite impressive and very easy to divide from their creeping rootstocks. Why accept just one each of beautiful plants when you easily could have at least a dozen. That reminds me of an excursion to the Beartooth Mts many years ago. When looking around upon all the flowering cushions, I realized that the beautiful landscape was composed by just a handful of different species but a lot of each species.

Wishing you all a good gardening 2008, the year which is just about two weeks ahead.

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*Gunne-Bert Wedell  
Bromma, Sweden  
December 25, 2007*

No need to talk about weather this year, it's only DRY, DRY, DRY but his time of the year the temps is more favorable around zero C.

We had the warm spring but after midsummer it has been mostly moderate temps, 10 -20C, and the fall has been cold and gave not Indian Summer this year and the late autumn asters have not got their flowers full opened. Only *P. serrulatus*, *P. barbatus*, and *P. heterophyllus* have been in flower this year in our garden. Spring gave a good early flowering, bulbs and anemones but woodland plants like trilliums suffered of missing rains and gave almost no seed crops.

Fifth of July we met Mike and Joyce Evans (Wyoming APS members, ed.) for some hours in our garden. They were in a hurry but I showed them some runstones and rock carvings around in western Stockholm. We are looking forward to meet Mike in this Robin.

Jill's reports from her perfect gardening position is encouraging for us living in colder parts of Europe, I dream about a trip to visit your Portland garden.

Libby's nice report from her latitude equal to Morocco, Tunisia in Africa over here gives a reality to the differences between our gardens. Her continental climate shifts the temps back and forth rapidly between summer temps and hard frost in April in contrast to our maritime climate where the temperatures are more uniform in spite of our latitude equaling Anchorage in Alaska.

Your report from APS meeting in Idaho remembers of places we should have visited on our trip in 1990, a 7000 km car trip from Tacoma southeast through the Rockies down to Denver, then west to LA and then north via Owens Valley, Lassen NP, Oregon and back to Tacoma. We saw almost all what we expected but Idaho, because of heavy rains which kept us inside the car those days, also Bitterroot Range rained away. And so your pictures and words now give a taste of sunny days in Idaho. Thanks.

A Happy New Gardening Year to all Robin Members.

*Jill and Peter Pitman*  
Portland, Dorset, England  
January 2008

The new consignment of 'Robins' arrived here on Thursday 3 January. We are the last in the line and find it fascinating to read about our neighbours in Europe and the far flung USA.

Didn't I read that the consensus of opinion was that the Robins should end??? (Or be in another format). When is this happening – is it happening – I would continue as long as required, (you will note from the attached address list that Eric has retired to the allotments). I can write for England!!! – the trouble is, I cannot stop! If the Robins are going to be added to the APS website then I can add pictures and email the pieces, and I expect most of the remaining Robins could do the same which would give the APS more of a global theme. I delight in adding photographs to these pieces.

I did a cross between *P. Abbotsmerry* and *P. Capricorn Moon* in 2005 and the ones which survived I have named after areas of Portland. If they do well and give us a different range of colours and patterns I will register them with Dale next year. It is definitely a 'wait and see' game.

The new layout will give the hybrid *Penstemon* much more room and the species *Penstemon* a raised bed so that they are easier to see. At the top of the garden there will be another raised bed for the hardy orchids which I have been collecting for some time: *roscoea* and *bletilla* are the main ones with *epipaticus* and a new one I have just discovered and plan to purchase the White Egret Orchid (new from Japan) the nursery catalogue says! How new remains to be seen!!!

Happy Gardening to all – The Robins

## POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| President:                            | Bob McFarlane, denverbob@aol.com                |
| Vice President:                       | Ginny Maffitt, maffitt@verizon.net              |
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