

THE NORTHERN OUTCROP

A Rock Garden Newsletter

April 2020

After a great start to the new year, activities have come to a halt for now. Several new members joined at the Garden Expo and we completed our part in the second round of the NARGS seed distribution. Then Covid-19 became an issue and our meetings have been cancelled until further notice.

Two special plants

Jean Halverson

I moved five years ago and a filing box filled with information collected in my earlier gardening years hadn't been touched. So sorting that was one of the projects for this time of restricted movement. Most of the files were discarded because my interests have changed or I now know the information. Several files were about special plants and details are below.

Dwarf yellow iris

Florence Stout presented a program on iris to our chapter many, many years ago. We were allowed to take a seedling home and my memory is that she said she wanted the plant back if it had a red flower. Obviously, mine didn't.



I didn't record what iris she crossed to produce the seedlings. This the first iris to bloom for me and its citrus fragrance perfumes a wide area on a warm spring day. The blooming plant is about 3 inches tall and the seed pod sits on the ground. Either I have been too busy at that time of year to collect seed or it hasn't produced seed. Maybe I'll pay more attention to the seed pods this spring.

This plant spreads as easily as other iris and has been shared through plant sales, etc., with our chapter. I should have some again for our fall sale.

Trillium grandiflorum double green



Some of our longtime members will remember Virginia Umberger, a great Illinois gardener. She had a large clump of this double green trillium blooming during a meeting at her garden and my sister greatly admired it. Virginia later generously sent a piece for each of us. This is prime trading material!

My file had correspondence with several international trillium experts and this is probably the plant found by Tage Lundell, a Swedish gardener. He shared it with Harry Elkins in Michigan. Tage and Harry had passed away but both had shared it among friends and I believe that is how Virginia received her plant.

I was told it was Elgins form but that was probably confusion between Elkins and Elgin, a city near Virginia's home. One of my correspondents, a friend of Tage's, said

Harry had Lundell's form but it wasn't clear if he meant that was the source of the plant or the name Tage or Harry had assigned to it. Cultivar names are so easily corrupted!

I located the trillium group on Facebook, found an earlier discussion about this or a similar plant, and hope to get some name clarification. As I read my earlier correspondence, some information is unclear. For example, Tage found the plant but did he find it in Sweden or on a visit to the states? One of the correspondents made reference to exploring the woods of some friends in the US looking for T. grandiflorum double forms. I probably wasn't as analytical in my younger years or else didn't want to cross examine these experts whose native language wasn't English.

This plant is sterile and propagation is slow. Although green flowers are often caused by disease or virus, this is genetically green and perfectly healthy.

May we all stay healthy and sane in these challenging times.

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