

LITERATURE CITED

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PERENNIALS WORTHY OF CULTIVATION

GERALD B. STRALEY

*The Botanical Garden, The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1W5, Canada*

The University of British Columbia Botanical Garden operates a Plant Introduction Scheme of the Botanical Garden (P.I.S.B.G.) in an effort to introduce new cultivars and recommended plants to the public. The new plants are propagated by the Garden and released to particular nurseries in the province who agree to further propagate them and release them to the public at a later date. Thus far a number of woody materials and ground covers have been released through the P.I.S.B.G. or are now being tested or considered for inclusion. Only one perennial has been released to date, but with the comeback in popularity that perennials have enjoyed in recent years, we are considering other new and under-utilized perennials for inclusion in the P.I.S.B.G.

The first perennial in the P.I.S.B.G. is the blue pimpernel (*Anagallis monelli*). It has been grown to a limited extent in North American gardens, but most plants prove to be annuals or biennials at best. Our perennial plant which we have registered as 'Pacific Blue' is a selection from seed received from the Alpine Garden Society of England in 1980. Large gentain-blue flowers cover the low, spreading plants from late May

until hard frosts in our climate. Plants root easily from cuttings during the summer. It may be used in front of perennial borders, in alpine gardens, as a container plant to provide summer color, or in hanging baskets. It should be given a sunny location as the flowers remain closed in shade or on cloudy days. Its perennial habit needs to be further tested in hotter and colder climates.

Another plant we are considering selection of good forms of is the South African *Schizostylis coccinea*. This is one of our best fall flowering perennials for cool, wet climates. The erect spikes of brilliant red flowers provide color at a time when it is needed. There are a few named cultivars, especially pink-flowered forms, available in England, but not often found in North America. The plants can be established easily by seed, divisions in spring, or from small plantlets produced on the flowering stems. Seedlings will flower the first year if started indoors in winter. We have recently had the plant successfully tissue-cultured.

We have undertaken a limited selection and breeding program with the blue poppies (*Meconopsis*), in an effort to select more perennial forms of the beautiful blue-flowered *Meconopsis betonicifolia*, which is usually a monocarpic biennial. Crosses have been made between species in an effort to combine the flower color of some of the blue species with the perennial nature of some other species such as *Meconopsis cambrica* or *Meconopsis villosa*.

Diascia rigescens is a perennial in the Scrophulariaceae from South Africa recently introduced into a few gardens in the British Isles and the West Coast of North America. It has received rave reviews whenever seen. The grey-green foliage is partially to completely evergreen depending on the climate making the plants attractive even when not in flower. However, from June until hard frost, at least in the Pacific Northwest, the plants are covered with arching spikes of bright carmine-rose flowers resembling a small snapdragon, to which it is related. The plants look tidy throughout the summer, even if old flower stalks are not removed, as new growth and flowers are produced continuously throughout the summer and fall. The plants root easily from cuttings. Our plants have survived two severe winters and one very hot, dry summer since planting, with no losses.

The *Oenotheras* or evening primroses are not grown in perennial borders as much as they should be. They probably have a bad name because of the biennial kinds flowering only one season, or reseeding and becoming pests, or because of the evening flowering habit of the common ones. However, there

are two eastern North American species which are perennial and long-lasting in the garden, with large bright yellow flowers which open in the morning. These are *Oenothera fruticosa* and *Oenothera pilosella*, which should have the more appropriate common names of suncups or sundrops. There is much confusion over the naming of forms and cultivars in the former species. When one obtains a named cultivar of this species it is hard to tell what will result. The plant is quite variable in nature and there is much that could be done in selecting and naming good forms or in hybridization. I know of no cultivars of *Oenothera pilosella*, a rhizomatous species especially common in the Ohio Valley. It is cultivated to a limited extent in the East, but very rarely in the West.

Kirengeshoma palmata and *Kirengeshoma koreana* (Saxifragaceae). These two species or forms of a single species are excellent summer-flowering perennials for cool climates. The bold, pale green foliage and tubular yellow flowers are attractive for a partially shaded situation. The leaves sun-burn in full sun even in our cool, wet climate of the Pacific Northwest. *Kirengeshoma koreana* has been much the better of the two in our garden. The flowers are larger and open more widely. *Kirengeshomas* are not often seen outside botanical gardens and collector's gardens.

Papaver spicatum — We received this poppy labelled as *Meconopsis*, which it does resemble, especially when in the basal rosette stage. The soft grey leaves are attractive before flowering and the 3-foot spikes of the tissue-paper like, pale orange flowers are very showy in early summer.

Incarvillea olgae is a very different member of this genus from *Incarvillea delavayi*, the usual stemless species grown in our gardens. We have grown it successfully for a number of years. It is a bit lanky with stems two to three feet tall which usually fall over, but the bright-green, dissected foliage and rose-pink flowers produced in late summer are very attractive. Dwarf or more compact forms of this need to be selected.

Some other perennials which deserve to be grown more widely include some of the smaller flowered *Kniphofias*, the blue *Agapanthus* species, hardier forms of *Alstroemeria* and many of the bold-leaved *ligularias* and *rodgersias*.

Among the many native perennials which deserve some selection and trials in our gardens include the perennial species of geraniums, the low-growing phloxes, erigonums, asters, *Iliamna rivularis*, and selections of the eastern native butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*).