



Seseli gummiferum J. McKenney

Potomac Valley Chapter
North American Rock
Garden Society

PVC Bulletin

September 2014



Buddleja 'Buzz Magenta' J. McKenney

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<http://www.pvcnargs.org/>

You can pay your dues by sending your check for \$15 (payable to PVC Rock Garden Society) to Margot Ellis, 2417 N Taylor St., Arlington, VA 22207 4pvctreas@gmail.com
Your dues must be up to date for you to participate in the plant exchange!

Calendar 2014

Most meetings are Saturday mornings- 9:30am coffee; 10am presentation, unless otherwise noted. Coffee/Tea and donuts will be provided at meetings.

September 13 We will have a table at the fall Green Spring Park sale; we will not be selling plants, but we will be greeting the public and soliciting memberships. Rob Gimpel, one of our members, will be selling troughs and may give a demonstration of how to plant a trough. Four volunteers are needed for two shifts of approximately 3 hours each (two volunteers per shift). Please contact Margot (4pvctreas@gmail.com) or Kevin (kmac53@verizon.net) to volunteer as soon as possible.

September 20 Azalea Auction and Sale - Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Springfield, VA 1-4:30 pm

September 26, Friday, a trip to High Glen Gardens west of Frederick MD sponsored by the Four Seasons Garden Club to which our members have been invited. Contact Jim Dronenburg for details.

September 27 9:30 A.M. Plant Exchange The home of the Washburns at 5410 Huntington Parkway Bethesda, MD 20814, phone (301) 656-8281

September 27 at 1:00 pm at the family home. **Memorial service for Jo Banfield** and Sandy Banfield. The address is 15715 Avery Road, Derwood MD 20855.

September 27, North Alexandria Native Plant Sale: see page 10

Thursday October 2 Alexis Datta will be speaking to the Four Seasons Garden Club at Historic Takoma. This will be a DIFFERENT lecture, centering on the actual work that is done there, as

opposed to a travelogue. Attendance will be limited to FS members; although we will, as in previous Big Speaker events, have a table at the door and graciously take CY2014 memberships, to help defray the speaker cost. J Historic Takoma can seat fifty; so **register early. RSVP to me at jdronenburg@ssa-i.org**

Historic Takoma is at 7328 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912. To get there from the Beltway, take University Blvd East, MD 193 E exit, which is Exit 29, toward Langley Park. Go 1.8 miles. Turn slight right onto Carroll Avenue/MD-195. This is just past Forston Street; if you reach Merrimac Drive you have gone too far. Go 1.3 miles on Carroll. 7328 is on the right, just past Lee Avenue.

NOTE: Continue 200 feet past 7328 to the intersection. Dead ahead of you is Takoma/Silver Spring Co-op. To the right of that is a (meter) parking lot that is MUCH easier than finding a street spot.

See the following entry for more information about the speaker.

Friday Oct 3, at six thirty PM at the Botanic Garden, **Alexis Datta, retired Head Gardener at Sissinghurst Castle Garden**, brings one of the most famous and visited gardens in England to you. Join her during a rare visit to the US, explore the history and philosophy of Sissinghurst, and learn about its creators, the Observer gardening columnist Vita Sackville-West and her husband, author and diplomat Harold Nicolson. Queen Elizabeth I visited Sissinghurst in 1573 and stayed for three days. Within a century the site was a ruin. Discover the transformation of the site brought about by the Nicols as you see the Castle Garden's many outdoor rooms as they look today. A bonus for rosarians: gain insight on the unique way the Castle Garden's old-fashioned roses are pruned and trained. Friends of the BG, \$30; non members \$35; Pre-registration required; Visit www.usbg.com

Note: "Queen Elizabeth I", as opposed to the current Queen, is not a typo. Jim D
Editor's note: check this out, too

<http://mcwort.blogspot.com/2007/12/vita-sackville-west-rediviva.html>

October 15th Panayoti Kelaidis, 7 P.M. National Arboretum Auditorium. Panayoti is the senior curator and director of outreach at Denver Botanic Gardens. He designed the plantings for the world-renowned Rock Alpine Garden and helped implement Wildflower Treasures, South African Plaza and the Romantic Gardens among many other gardens at Denver Botanic Gardens.

YOU MUST PREREGISTER by Oct 13th to me at jdronenburg@ssa-i.org so that I can get your names to the Arboretum. I must have all names to give Lindsay at the Arboretum by 1:00 Tuesday Oct. 14. She in turn has to send the names to security for the gate. Important! All must be preregistered: no walk-ins allowed. There will be a list at the R Street gate and if you are not on it, no entry. Important again! Only the R Street gate will be open. Do not use GPS because it will lead to the NY Ave. entrance. You can try using 24th & R Streets, NE in GPS. Warning: if you end up at the NY Ave. gate, it is very difficult to get back to R Street due to NY Ave going only east.

Once the Four Seasons list is full, I'd suggest calling the Arboretum and see if you can get in on *their* seating list. **(Heads-up, they are charging a \$12 fee)** If you are a member of FS and PVC NARGS, if you find one list full, try the other. The National Arboretum is not Metro-handly.

October 25th 9:30 A.M. NARGS Eastern Speaker, Mike Kintgen "Searching for Beauty on 5 Continents and a Bit of History of Rock Gardening in Europe and North America"

Saturday October 25, WEST ROOM at Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814 (free parking [entrance on Edgemoor] under the building)
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/bcc/>

Mike Kintgen is a Senior Horticulturist at the Denver Botanic Gardens where he oversees the Alpine Collection and nine gardens, including the Rock Alpine Garden, and South African Plaza. Mike says: "We will take a brief tour of some of the most beautiful places I have traveled to, always with the idea of observing and photographing the local flora and landscapes. We will visit Western North America, Argentina, Morocco, Europe and a brief stop in China. After that we will take a quick look at the rise of romanticism and its inspiration for rock gardening and other gardens inspired by nature."

November 22, Members' Slide Show and Annual reports from Officers and Committee Chairs, location TBA

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The deadline for the next issue of this bulletin is October 15, 2014

President's Message

President's message

This starts out with, by now, ancient history....

As May passes into June, I must add a note perhaps inappropriate for NARGS, as it concerns mainly large woody plants. But the shrill cries of joy, as things which were previously thought victims of this past winter continue to break one by one into leaf, continue. The kindly at heart tend to think something like "Resurrexit!" and the crusty curmudgeons (like me) tend to echo the line of Max the Miracle Worker: "It wasn't dead. It was just *mostly* dead. There's a bi-i-g difference." But one, of course, that we are all glad of. (See Bob Faden's article, below... Then have a word with your

Deiti(es) of Choice, because some of the weather pundits are calling for the same sort of winter this year too.... Ugggh.)

The Green Spring Garden Day sale was a big success this year- whether because people were more inclined to spend money or whether they HAD to spend money, to replace winter losses, is unknown; but spend they did. PVC netted \$1,039, I believe, not shabby at ALL. Kudos to those who worked their tail feathers off.

I was heartened, at the Fall plant exchange last year at the Macintosh's, to see a new young couple, Rachel and Josh, both knowledgeable and personable. All winter I entertained pipe dreams of using them as "duck decoys" to entice a flock of other younger people in... and now I find they have moved to North Carolina. Rats. Start back at square one.

Those long in the tooth know that I've always billed myself as a "generalist, not a rock gardener" because RG-ing was so small a portion of the total of my interests. But in the fall of 2012 I put in a rock-garden berm at the south end of my courtyard. I planted various species tulips, of which my experiences to that point were, "one spring, then sayonara". They came up better this year than last year! Obviously I'd been missing out on a lot, and I'll admit it now. Time to haul more rocks.

Last year our longtime member Alma Kasulaitis gave up her garden. I was one of the people who came and dug bulbs and plants. A lot of what I dug was daffodil bulbs which were shaded and had gone to small bulblets. I planted them, expecting that they would have to settle in and bulk up before they would bloom in 2015, but a few of them bloomed their little heads off. As there were hundreds, next spring should be great. I note in passing that daffodils, snowdrops, snowflakes, Lycoris and crinums are in the amaryllis family and as such have a poisonous sap. And it's a "friendly" poison—it tastes so nasty that nothing on four feet would ever eat enough of it to die. But they will (or should) leave the plants alone after the first nibble. A point to remember.

On April 26, PVC people joined Mason Dixon Chapter for a tour of Colston Burrell's garden and the Daniels estate close by. A good time was had by all, even though some of us (like me, for example) were tied up in the traffic jam engendered by a nearby horse race for up to an hour, which tended to straggle the group out. (We interacted with Mason-Dixon again in July, a joint picnic, and a couple of dozen were there.) For those who didn't go on the 4/26 tour, you can go to www.danielweil.com and go to the gallery 'Flora' and look at the sub-galleries "CD Garden" and "Bird Hill".

We go into the Fall with an information /trough table at Green Spring Gardens on Sept 13th, more for the exposure than anything else. It perhaps is not financially productive but with any luck at all it will net us some new members. As (I forget who) put it at the last Board meeting, "Especially at Green Spring, we can take people over to the rock garden and they can see what can be done." Or similar words. To that end, I was wondering—how long has it been since I grabbed someone by the scruff of the neck

and hauled them in to PVC? Three years, I think. Surely I must know *someone*..... and perhaps you do too?

We are also trying a consortium with the National Arboretum and the Four Seasons Garden Club, to bring Panayoti Kelaidis east again. He will speak at the Arboretum on the evening of the 15th of October. PVC gets 46-2/3 seats of the auditorium out of this, so if more than 46 people want to go we may have a problem. We'll announce who will handle the RSVP's—hopefully not myself.

On a personal note, we have just heard from our contractor-to-be and in a few weeks Dan and I should break foundations for a new potting shed. Literally. The old one is falling apart and has to come down, thus break foundations before we can break ground. The new one will be about fourteen by twenty, with lots of counter space, and will double as an unheated greenhouse, so hopefully I will be able to contribute more to Green Spring next year.

All the best until we see each other.... Come to Green Spring and schmooze on Sept 13th! Jim

The Expanding Garden

When 'Dead' Isn't Really Dead

The winter of 2013-2014 ranks as one of the worst that we have seen in our nearly 35 years in the Washington, DC area. Very cold temperatures (<10°F) happened several times and subfreezing nights were frequent. Only the winter of 1993-1994, when temperatures dropped below 0°F, seems comparable, in our experience. That winter we lost our windmill palm (*Trachycarpus fortunei*) despite having wrapped it with burlap and oak leaves, and our evergreen *Clematis armandii* froze to the ground, apparently perishing.

This winter, however, the damage seemed even greater. Perhaps it was just because it is fresher in our minds. What we are seeing, however, is a slow recovery by many trees and shrubs that we had written off as dead and gone. All three of our figs are shooting, either from the base, irregularly in the crown, or both. Even the *Eucalyptus cinerea* in Simpson Park, which had lost nearly all of its

small shoots, was discovered to have some life in the trunk only yesterday (May 26). *Mahonia eurybracteata* 'Soft Caress', which a landscaper in Old Town, Alexandria had written off completely several months ago, sprouted from the base, as did *Pterostyrax corymbosa*, *Indigofera heterantha*, which would later sprout from the top as well, *Deutzia setchuensis*, *Hypericum pseudohenryi*, *Leycesteria formosa* 'Golden Lantern', *Forestiera angustifolia* 'Pendula', *Hydrangea macrophylla* cultivars, *Punica granatum* (Dwarf pomegranate) and, most recently (late July), the woody vine *Trachelospermum jasminoides*. Our large *Sarcococca confusa* lost all of its foliage and most of its smaller shoots but started sprouting from a number of the larger stems. This growth proved to be so weak, that when it started sending strong shoots up from the base, we cut off all of the old shoots. Similarly *Ruscus aculeatus* began to look worse and worse with the onset of warm weather, and it too had to be rejuvenated by cutting off the old shoots once the new ones had started to grow.

Still dead or apparently dead are our bayleaf or sweet bay (*Laurus nobilis*), *Abelia schumannii* 'Bumblebee', *Citrus* 'Yuzu Ichandrin', *Stewartia malacodendron* and the Spanish fir (*Abies pinsapo* 'Glauca'), the last two having been planted the previous fall. *Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Rotundifolius' clearly succumbed, but the other three *Osmanthus* cultivars, which were also planted last fall, seem to be in good condition. Most surprising among them was *O. heterophyllus* 'Goshiki', which not only had to put up with the winter, but it also had a YMCA van drive over it twice, the vehicle having lost its brakes, or so the driver claimed. We suspect that the evergreen boughs, from which we had formed a tepee around the small plant, had acted as a cushion. But perhaps it was the Hand of God. Who are we to know?

Some evergreen shrubs and trees that might be considered marginal here, faced the winter and fared remarkably well, for example, *Choisya x dewitteana* 'Aztec Pearl' and *Persea borbonia* (Redbay). Our male ('Will Fleming') and female ('Hoskin Shadow') *Ilex vomitoria* (Yaupon) also were undamaged. *Illicium* 'Woodland Ruby' did very well, but it grows in a protected spot and had been covered.

So how do you know when a plant is really dead, and how long should you wait before you cut it down? Obviously, the longer you wait, the greater the opportunity for the plant to show signs of life. Removing the "ugly thing" is certainly one option and a temptation, but unless it's a public garden or you have lots of money for tree removal, you have nothing to lose by waiting. The mention above of our *Clematis armandii*, which showed no signs of life after the bitter winter of 1993-94 until October, 1994, is a prime example of being rewarded for patience (or was it sloth?). When in doubt, and if the plant is small enough, give it a tug. Even dead roots may be firm in the soil, but at least there's hope. If all the bark is dry and cracking, then the whole plant may well be dead, but give it a chance to prove you wrong.

So do we know what this past winter has done to our gardens? Although this piece was originally written on May 26th and is being somewhat updated on August 4th, I would still reply, "Not for certain." We do know that the spring bulbs were extraordinary and so was the blooming of many of the spring-flowering trees and shrubs. Hopefully, the bugs are down, although the first mosquitoes were already on the wing when this was first drafted. The growing season is not yet over, and there is always next year.

One lesson, at least for us, is that if you must plant small evergreens in the fall, you would do well to protect them from the wind and cold. We did that for the four *Osmanthus* cultivars that we planted, and three survived. We didn't protect the Spanish fir, and it clearly didn't. The covering of our (apparently) departed *Citrus* was not very secure and the plant perished, whereas the *Mahonia* 'Soft Caress', which was growing next to it and was covered by a good fleece bag, also looked dead at first, but it appears to be coming back.

We would like to think that when plants become more established they become more resistant to the elements. But even if they don't, they may become too large to cover. Our needle palm (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*) had been in the ground for a few years when the '93-'94 winter came along. We had it covered then. Twenty years later it had no trouble at all this past winter and anyway was much too large to cover. So

choose your plants wisely. We may be experiencing global warming, but don't count on it every winter!

Robert Faden

NARGS News

Only Bobbie Lively-Diebold and myself attended the AGM in Santa Fe New Mexico over Labor Day. I am fortunate that Bobbie takes amazing notes of every wonderful plant that made us spellbound. The big disappointment was that the main speaker, Jim Reveal, botanist extraordinaire had a heart attack earlier in the week and couldn't appear. Although Panayoti Kelaidis subbed for him with his excellent and educational presentation on "Sky Islands in a Sea of Sage: the Paradox of the West," our concern for Jim overshadowed the talk. Jim wanted to come with his new 3 stents, but the cardiologist said No. Dan Johnson's talk on the Stepps of the World had the most amazing slide presentation on endemic plants across the world. Dan and Panayoti work together at Denver BG. A big hit was the talk by David Salman, owner of High Country Nursery of amazing, over the top plants. He was given the NARGS LePiniec Award for propagation and well deserved. He has single-handedly introduced more growable plants for the xeric climate than most other nurseries.

The hotel was lovely, well located and Santa Fe has amazing trails and scenery right out the door. We were able to do one of four trails according to walking abilities. The weather was perfect. Between the mountains, gorges, arroyos and cliff dwellings, it is an amazing place to visit for gardeners,.

The biggest hit were the personal garden visits. Santa Fe is a NEW chapter and has 40 members, but about 16 of them are hard working and with NARGS help put on an outstanding first meeting. The most dramatic garden was Robin and Juliet Magowan's and David Salman, very different from each other. Amazing troughs at Robin and phenomenal views. David's garden was like an ad for High Country Gardens. Other gardens were Joan and

Truel West, Sam Hitt and the botanic garden.



The next meetings is in Ann Arbor MI May 7, 8, 9 and post conference trip on the tenth. The Great Lakes presentation generated a low of oohs and aaaahs. Prices will be less than Santa Fe.

Further discussion will be in next newsletter as I fill you in my new assignment as VP and assisting Matt Mattus the new president. I can't wait to invite him to speak to the chapter. He is the polar opposite of Peter.

There will be some changes coming as to chapter interaction with NARGS and what will be required to remain affiliated. Good news 191 new members joined this past year. Seedex made some money; But There are 2,900 memers in North American NARGS affiliated chapters, but only 750 actually belong to NARGS. There is a lot at stake for chapters. If they want affiliation, they will need to ensure members join NARGS first, and then attend a chapter of their choice.

Oh, the trip to Sierra Nevada in July was sold out and according to those who attended was beyond their expectations. Hopefully we can organize more of those trips and make them affordable.

I've gone on too long. Betty Anne Spar

**Fleeting but oh so beautiful:
new colors from the rainbow**



Iris 'Dardanus'

Jim McKenney



Iris 'Byzantine Ruby'

Jim McKenney

Take a look at the images here: these, obviously, are not your granny's irises. If you grow irises at all, you are probably aware of the so-called arilate irises, and if you think you know anything about them, it is probably that they can't be grown here easily.

Iris breeders have worked hard to combine the relative ease of culture of garden irises with the sometimes fantastic color patterns of the arilate group. For some reason or other, the word has not gotten out that these hybrids are relatively easy to manage. They are certainly a lot easier than the wild *onocyclus* irises.

Shown above are 'Dardanus', a hybrid very close to the wild forms and only a bit easier to manage. However, 'Dardanus' is readily available for a few dollars a pop, and thus

it's a good plant with which to practice. Once you've mastered 'Dardanus', you're set to move on to the more easily accommodated hybrids.

As an example of one of these hybrids, above you see 'Byzantine Ruby'. The first time I saw a photo of this many years ago I assumed I would never grow it: it seemed unattainably exotic and was still very rare. In August 2013 I finally got my chance, and that plant is the one you see above.

And here's an interesting coincidence: I mentioned arilate irises to Dick Hammerschlag at a meeting earlier this year and was surprised to hear that he too had just started to give some a trial. We exchanged lists, and as it turned out we grow some of the same ones! So expect some more photos in future editions of our bulletin.

Arilate or arillate: arilate seems to be the commonly used spelling now, but the Britton and Brown *Illustrated Flora* uses arillate (in the discussions of the seeds of *Jeffersonia*).

Fluffium

I ran across this name in the August 1952 edition of *Flower Grower* magazine. A friend who is downsizing had dropped off several boxes of old gardening ephemera, and this magazine was among them. . The name was too cute to ignore: Fluffium. What in the world was it? Fluffium was a soil amendment guaranteed to open your soil, make it easily penetrated, and do all sorts of other wonderful things to it.

I doubt if any of our current members are old enough to remember it, but have any of you ever heard stories about it?

But for Google, what I know about Fluffium might have stopped there. But a Google search turned up a Dutch document from 1954 which discussed Fluffium and similar products. That document also identified the active agent in Fluffium and similar products, and that led to another Google search which gave more information about the agent in question: it's a highly hygroscopic polymer called polyacrylamide.

Now we're getting somewhere. I've never seen Fluffium for sale, but I'm aware of the hygroscopic gels used today for water retention for potted plants. Are they the same thing? I checked the labels of one of these products, and it appears that at least some of the products sold today are the same thing: polyacrylamide.

I don't know who the genius was who coined the name Fluffium – this name is the one used by the once-famous Philadelphia seed house Henry A. Dreer, Inc. Similar products were marketed by other firms. In fact, the Dutch account from 1954 suggests that the combination of hyped advertising and an ever multiplying choice of products might cause a bit of a market boom, quickly sour the public on the products and eventually cause their undoubted utility to be compromised. By 1953 over 50 companies were marketing their version of this product – but none had a catchier name than Fluffium!

If you are interested, here's the link to the Dutch document:
<http://edepot.wur.nl/233551>

Search on "Fluffium" or go to page 4, bottom of left hand column.

Save your seeds....indefinitely

This spring I planted a long row of dill in my community garden plot. The resulting plants are ripening seed now. Are you perhaps wondering why I'm telling you about something so mundane? Here's what makes it so interesting: the packet of seed from which those plants were grown was purchased in 1994! A packet of sweet William seed from the same year also gave strong germination.

These seeds were stored at room temperature for the first few years I had them. Then they were moved to the refrigerator (not the freezer, the refrigerator). I've gotten similar results with seeds of garden nasturtiums and morning glories nearly as old and stored under similar conditions.

Don't discard un-used seed, save it in the refrigerator or freezer.

Leftover seeds from the 2014 NARGS Seed Exchange will be available at the next several meetings, until they are all claimed or abandoned. You will need a paper copy of the seed exchange list because many of these items have only numbers. And the ones with names are jumbled together, not in any particular order.

***Talinum* "Salt City Argentina"**

Talinum is a genus with a long history among rock gardeners. Many species are now called *Phemeranthus* rather than *Talinum*. One species, as *Talinum paniculatum* Jewels of Opar (aka Jewels of Ophir), is a commonly grown annual.

Earlier this year material of a form identified as *Talinum* sp. Salt City, Argentina, and donated by Lynn Makela was offered on the Pacific Bulb Society seed and bulb exchange. What I received was a dry but promising bit of root about the size of small bean. It grew well and is blooming now:



The Lynn Makela connection: in 1982 Lynn Makela became president of our group. She eventually left the DC area for Arizona, returned for a bit, then moved on to Florida. Several years ago a Lynn Makela from Florida began to offer bulbs on the Pacific Bulb Society bulb exchange. In response to that, I wrote to her and she confirmed that she was "our" Lynn Makela, now gardening

in Florida. Have any of you kept in touch with her?

Muriel Marston's books

Muriel Marston (not the Muriel Marston who was the wife of the Reynolds Tobacco heir) was an Anglo-Irish writer who published three garden books during the 1930s. After the First World War, she and her husband bought an existing home (a home designed by Baillie Scott no less) along the Avon River, a bit upstream from Stratford on Avon. She is getting a mention here because of her preoccupation with wall gardens. If you are planning a wall garden (I am) her text might add a bit of fuel to the fire. The photos in her book have the murky look typical of the time. If you can't get the books, take a look at the web site given below – her borders and walls are illustrated (but not well) there.

For more on Muriel Marston's home, see here:

<http://timetrail.warwickshire.gov.uk/detail.aspx?monuid=WA8529>

For more on Baillie Scott, see here:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baillie_Scott

Linguistics in the garden, or who put the "c" in *Puschkinia*?

Little *Puschkinia scilloides* is a common minor bulb, a squill relative with pale off-white flowers early in the late winter bulb show. It's currently placed in the Hyacinthaceae, although for most of the time since it was named in the early nineteenth century it was placed in the Liliaceae. For years I assumed that it was named for the famous Russian poet Pushkin; in fact, it's named for another Russian, the chemist Pushkin. The genus name was coined by the German/Russian botanist Adams (his name is also given as Adam), and – spoiler alert - while that bit of information seems to give away the question asked in the title of this piece, there is more to the story. Adams coined the name *Pushkinia* the year in which the chemist Pushkin died, 1805. What we know as

Puschkinia scilloides was once also known as *Adamsia scilloides*.

If the man's name is Pushkin, why did Adams spell the name *Puschkinia*? Where did the "c" come from? Here's what happened: Adams was a German and Russian speaking botanist who lived in St. Petersburg early in the nineteenth century. The name of the chemist was Пушкин (say push-kin); something had to be done in order to use that name as the basis for a botanical name using the Roman alphabet. That something was the transliteration (Romanization) of the Cyrillic Пушкин to the alphabet we use in the west. This sounds complicated, but it's really very simple: one simply makes a phonetic spelling in the target language (i.e. the language in which the transliterated word will be used) based on the sound (not the spelling) of the word in the source language. The spelling we use in English, "Pushkin", does just that: a speaker of English will closely approximate the sound of the Russian by pronouncing "Pushkin" as if it were an English word.

Simple as the process of transliteration is, there is an unavoidable complication. Many languages use some variation of the Latin alphabet; but there are variations in the way those letters are pronounced from language to language. Thus, a transliteration which works (works in the sense that it causes speakers to pronounce the word correctly) for speakers of English will not necessarily work for speakers of other languages. When Adams transliterated the Russian Пушкин, he was not doing it for speakers of English, he was doing it for speakers of German. To represent in German the sound of "sh" in the English word "show", one can write "sch" (there is at least one other way). To make a phonetic spelling for German of the Russian word Пушкин, one writes "Puschkin". And that's the source of our botanical Latin word *Puschkinia*.

So, which one is right? It's not a matter of right or wrong: both the English "Pushkin" and the German "Puschkin" are proper transliterations from Russian to those languages. For writing in English, use "Pushkin"; for purposes of botanical nomenclature in any language, use *Puschkinia*..

Box huckleberry

I came home with something nice from our spring sale at Green Spring Park: while we were sorting things out Saturday morning, someone dropped off two plants of box huckleberry, *Gaylussacia brachycera*. If you don't know this plant, start out with this link to learn more of the fascinating history of this plant:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaylussacia_brachycera

I didn't see who dropped off the plants and my only clue was the "CB" on the labels. In a happy coincidence, not long afterwards Adrian Higgins ran an article on box huckleberry. Who knew: the National Arboretum has for years been conducting a breeding program for this species. The article by Higgins interviewed Margaret Pooler, the manager of that breeding program. I contacted her to see if she was the source of the plants: but no, she was not.

At the recent board meeting, I tried my other clue: "CB". "Probably Carolyn Beck" someone suggested. And an email later I got a confirmation from Carolyn: it's she I have to thank.

Carolyn is involved in the azalea sale on the 20th; will a box huckleberry or two appear there, too?

Cotyledon or not?

Earlier this year two unrelated email threads focused briefly on the germination of plants which do not typically produce cotyledons above ground, *Jeffersonia dubia* and *Pamianthe peruviana* (an epiphytic amaryllid from, surprise, Peru).

In these plants, the first green blades which appear above ground are not cotyledons but rather the first true leaves. Unlike the beans you might have sprouted in kindergarten, the first leaves which the germinating seeds of many species produce are true leaves, not cotyledons. The cotyledons of these species remain underground.

The illustration shows germinated seeds of *Pamianthe peruviana*. My seeds came from the seed and bulb exchange of the Pacific Bulb Society; my \$2 lot contained seven seeds. I Googled "*Pamianthe* seeds" after their receipt and was astonished to find an eBay offer of \$43 per seed! Buyer beware indeed!



Germinated *Pamianthe peruviana* seed showing the first true leaf emerging. J.McKenney

On the masthead

Seseli gummiferum is worth growing for both its leaves and its flowers. Young plants produce a handsome soccer ball sized mound of finely dissected silver foliage. The flowers are white or white with a vague flush of pink. I first saw this plant, or another member of this genus, at Green Spring Park back in the Don Humphrey days; it took years, but it eventually appeared on the FROGS sales tables. These plants are sometimes called Moon Carrot.

Buddleja 'Buzz Magenta' is one of the new, small growing butterfly bushes. The flower color is intense and the plants so far have remained very low – under two feet high.

About the "j" in *Buddleja*: the short story is that it is not a "j", at least not the letter we call "j" in English. It's actually the Latin letter "i" (which to add to the confusion is in Latin pronounced like the English letter "e"). In Latin, "i" (say ee) is a weak vowel which tends to mutate to other sounds or disappear altogether. Try to pronounce the Latin letter combination "-ia" (say ee-ah quickly) and you will notice that the "ya" sound creeps in. The letter "j" does not exist in the Classical Latin alphabet, but in late

Latin, speakers noticed this “ya” sound and began to indicate this sound by adding the little tail to the letter “i” . The letter combination “ja” indicates the English sound “ya”. It’s an example of what is sometimes called a glide or a semi-vowel.

The plant is named for one Adam Buddle, and the name Buddle presumably was pronounced to rhyme with puddle rather than with Dudley. The final “e” in Buddle is silent; thus, as written the word Buddle looks as if it ends in a vowel, but really since the vowel is silent it ends in a liquid consonant sound (l). Try pronouncing Buddleja as Buddle (remember, rhymes with puddle) + ya: Buddle-ya.

plant exchange. Unfortunately for the more acquisitive among us, both events operate pretty much on a first come, first served basis. And both events are likely to have plants you’ll really want. Good luck choosing! Maybe it’s time to send a spouse or trusted friend –list in hand - to the event you will not be attending.

Check this link for more information:
www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org

Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale

This is the new name for the Park Fairfax sale. The sale takes place Saturday, September 27, and thus conflicts with our

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