



Royal
Horticultural
Society

RHS Plant Trials and Awards

Silver Saxifrages

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RHS Trial of Silver Saxifrages

'The encrusted or silver saxifrages make up a race so far ahead of every other in general garden value that a rock garden can be glorious with nothing else and without them could not be really glorious at all.'

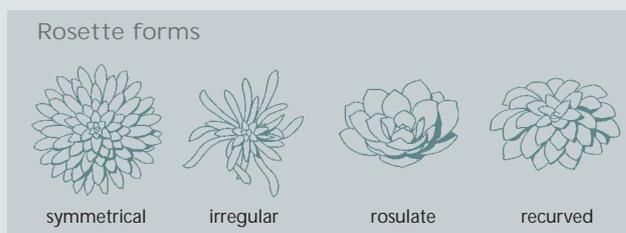
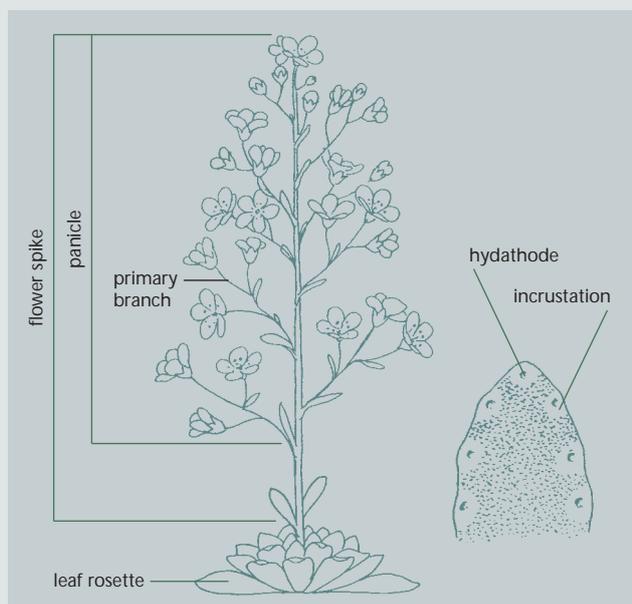
So said Reginald Farrer in 1919 of the silver saxifrage (*Saxifraga* Section *Ligulatae*). They are, indeed, magnificent plants furnishing the rock garden throughout the year with a contrast in form, colour and texture unmatched by any other section of the genus *Saxifraga*. Their flower panicles, sometimes with hundreds of flowers, appear in May and June. This is a bonus for the gardener, extending the season for saxifrages once the kabschias and the mossy saxifrages are over. However, the silvers are an often overlooked section, so the Rock Garden Plant Trials Subcommittee decided to conduct a trial to discover whether they really are as glorious as promised.

History

The earliest known reference to a saxifrage is in the 1st century AD when Dioscorides, a Greek doctor working for the Roman army, published his herbal *De Materia Medica*. Called *saxiphragon* by the Greeks and *saxifrage* by the Romans, the saxifrages were described as 'a shrub growing on rocks and in rough places'. The name means 'breaker of stones' but in this instance does not refer to the habitat of the plant but to its medicinal use in the treatment of kidney stones. The plant used by Dioscorides was *S. granulata*, a member of the Section *Saxifraga* from which the whole genus takes its name.

Plant Structure

The 'silver' in the name refers to the calcareous deposits arising on the leaves from lime-secreting pores (called hydathodes) set either within the leaf margins or on the upper surface of the leaf. The pores secrete a solution of water and calcium bicarbonate. The water evaporates leaving a silver encrustation of calcium carbonate on the leaf surface, the characteristic feature of ligulate saxifrages.



The silvering is intensified in spring as the plants come into growth and also in dry weather, the effect of which is to make them very attractive as foliage plants. The leaves are thick and leathery, without a distinct petiole and vary from spoon to strap-shaped.

Like the rest of the genus the flower structure of the silver saxifrages comprises five petals, five sepals, 10 stamens and two carpels. The flower panicle emerges from the centre of the rosette and after flowering both the spike and supporting rosette die. A consequence of this for species such as *S. longifolia*, where generally only one rosette is produced, is that the whole plant dies after flowering. The other species of the silvers, however, form perennial, evergreen cushions or mats, consisting of many rosettes ensuring a plentiful supply of flowering rosettes as well as propagating material.

Cultivars

Over the years at least 160 forms of saxifrage have been recognised. Some are forms of the species collected from the wild many years ago, such as *S. paniculata* var. *minutifolia* which comes from the Monte Baldo region in Italy and was described by Engler & Irmscher in 1919. There are also natural hybrids in the wild such as *S. × lhommei*, which is a cross between *S. longifolia* and *S. paniculata* found in the Pyrenees. All plants of this parentage have this name and as yet there are no named cultivars.

Many cultivars are the result of chance seedlings in cultivation. There has been hardly any deliberate hybridisation of silver saxifrages. *Saxifraga* 'Tumbling Waters' is the most famous exception, raised in 1913 by Captain Symons-Jeune, who crossed a fine form of *S. callosa* subsp. *callosa* var. *australis* (syn. *S. lantoscana*) with *S. longifolia*. It truly deserved its Award of Merit in 1920, won by a unanimous vote.

Most silver saxifrages have white flowers sometimes with faint red spotting in the throat. There is a yellow form of *S. paniculata* named 'Lutea' and this is one of the parents of 'Esther', a very pretty hybrid with arching flower spikes of lemon flowers lightly spotted with pink, which has been in cultivation since 1930. *Saxifraga* 'Canis-dalmatica', a lusty hybrid with red spotted white flowers, appeared at the same time. 'Hare Knoll Beauty' came from seed of *S. paniculata* subsp. *cartilaginea* collected in a Derbyshire garden in 1994 and has deep rose-coloured flowers, red in bud fading to palest pink.

Front cover: *S.* 'Tumbling Waters' (Photo M. Dashwood)
Opposite: *S.* 'Tumbling Waters' flower panicle (Photo M. Dashwood)



Award of Garden Merit (H4) 2003

Saxifraga callosa subsp. *callosa* var. *australis* 'Superba'

Saxifraga × *gaudinii* 'Canis-dalmatica'

Saxifraga 'Monarch'

Saxifraga paniculata 'Lagraveana'

Saxifraga paniculata 'Venetia'

Saxifraga (Silver Farreri Group) 'Reginald Farrer'

Saxifraga (Silver Farreri Group) 'Snowflake'

Saxifraga (Southside Seedling Group) 'Slack's Ruby Southside'

Saxifraga (Southside Seedling Group) 'Southside Star'

Saxifraga 'Whitehill'

Saxifraga 'Winifred Bevington' (Intersectional hybrid between *Ligulatae* and *Gymnopera*)

Award of Garden Merit (H4) 1993 re-confirmed

Saxifraga cochlearis 'Minor'

Saxifraga paniculata 'Lutea'

Saxifraga paniculata 'Rosea'

Saxifraga 'Tumbling Waters'

Award of Garden Merit (H4) 1993 recommended to be rescinded at the next review

Saxifraga 'Southside Seedling'

Saxifraga 'Kathleen Pinsent'

Saxifraga cochlearis 'Major'

Saxifraga callosa

(H4) = hardy throughout the UK

Award of Garden Merit 🏆 criteria

The Award of Garden merit requires a plant to be:

- excellent for garden decoration
- available
- of good constitution
- reasonably easy to grow
- reasonably resistant to pest and disease
- essentially stable in form and colour

The Trial

The Trial

Three plants of each entry were submitted to trial in 10cm pots, by senders from across the UK, Netherlands and France. Planting of the trial was undertaken by Mr Adrian Young (a co-opted specialist to the Sub-committee) in September 2000 in raised beds under an adjustable polytunnel frame, plants spaced 12cm apart. The growing medium used in this trial consisted of one part 20mm ballast, four parts 6mm-to-dust crushed grit and three parts general-purpose compost. The ballast helps to keep the roots cool and moist especially in drier weather. A top dressing of slate chippings was also applied to conserve moisture. The beds were slightly sloping to the north to give some protection from the hottest sunshine.

Trial Entries

There was a total of 244 entries in this trial, planted in raised beds:

Bed 1 contained plants that prefer a slightly more shady position. These included *S. cotyledon*, *S. paniculata* and their hybrids and the intersectional hybrids between the sections *Ligulatae* and *Gymnopera*. *Saxifraga callosa* was also in this bed, as it prefers to grow in a NE or NW facing position.

Bed 2 contained plants that tolerate a more sunny aspect including *S. longifolia*, *S. cochlearis*, *S. crustata*, *S. hostii* and related hybrids. These plants still need a cool root run and a gritty soil.

Trial objectives

The aims of the trial included:

- The identification of the best and most distinctive cultivars for the RHS Award of Garden Merit
- The establishment of the correct nomenclature
- Demonstration of cultivation techniques
- The collection of herbarium and photographic records together with descriptions, as a permanent record.

Findings

Trials always present an excellent opportunity to investigate nomenclature problems and this trial was no exception.

***Saxifraga* 'Southside Seedling'** One area of confusion concerned the cultivar *S.* 'Southside Seedling' which was first shown to the RHS Scientific Committee in June 1951 and considered 'remarkable for its red colouring over the middle third of the petals'. However, over the years several 'versions' of *S.* 'Southside Seedling' have emerged in cultivation. Owing to this considerable variation the Sub-Committee accepted the recommendation that a Southside Seedling Group be formed within which specific clones can be given cultivar names. From the trial two such clones were identified, given new cultivar names and awarded an AGM. These were *S.* 'Slack's Ruby Southside' and *S.* 'Southside Star'.

***Saxifraga* × *gaudinii* 'Canis-dalmatica'** is a selection from *S. cotyledon* × *S. paniculata*, of garden origin. The Sub-committee considered that it should be cited with its hybrid binomial.

***Saxifraga paniculata* 'Venetia'** has been treated in the past as a botanical variety rather than a cultivar. However, the Sub-committee considered there seemed little justification in treating it as such, as it is well known in gardens as an apparently uniform clone.

***Saxifraga paniculata* 'Lagroveana'** Confusion between the *S. paniculata* cultivars 'Lagroveana' and 'Correvoniana' centres on descriptions of the cultivars which do not match the plants currently in cultivation. Plants in cultivation under the name *S.* 'Correvoniana', including the two submitted for trial, fit the description of *S. paniculata* 'Lagroveana'. The original plant to which the name *S.* 'Correvoniana' belongs is no longer known to be in cultivation. To add further to the confusion there are also plants in cultivation incorrectly referred to as *S.* 'Lagroveana' that need to be given a new cultivar name.

***Saxifraga* (Silver Farreri Group) 'Reginald Farrer'** has previously been sold under the name *S.* × *farreri*.

There were also several incorrectly named entries sent to trial, which the Sub-committee was able to correctly identify. The senders were then informed of the changes so they could update their records.

Cultivation & Propagation

These plants inhabit the European mountain chains growing in rocky crevices on steep north-east facing slopes between 1000 and 2000 metres. The atmosphere is rarely dry due to snowmelt, storms and mist and their roots are always kept cool. There are nine species in the wild, most of them growing on crumbly limestone. *Saxifraga cotyledon* is generally found on acid soils in the wild, so a neutral or slightly acid soil in cultivation would be suitable. However, observations have been made of *S. cotyledon* growing on limestone in Sweden (B Bland, *pers. comm.*), so if you have sufficient plants you could experiment with growing one or two in a more alkaline, free draining mix. Fortunately, for gardeners, the other saxifrages will tolerate any mix as long as there is plenty of gravel and stone available for rapid drainage. A mix of 50% compost (J. Innes No. 2) and 50% 4mm sharp grit is ideal, especially for plants grown in troughs or pots.

Silver saxifrages cross-pollinate readily so generally do not come true from seed. However, side rosettes propagate easily and are best taken in September or March. To do this, gently remove rosettes from the cushion and plant in a pot containing the 50/50 mix topped with moist, sharp sand. Insert the rosettes in the sand and cover either with a clear lidded propagation tray or clear plastic bag and leave in a shady, cool place. Rooting generally takes place within a month.



Mike Sleight

An impressive display can be made in the rock garden by using the species alone. The plants are hardy and will happily grow in the open garden. Plants can be placed in many situations, particularly rock crevices, walls, raised beds, troughs and tufa. Most appreciate a well-drained, gritty soil with adequate moisture. The top 2–3cm should consist solely of chippings. *Saxifraga cotyledon* and its cultivars, Southside Seedling Group, *S. × andrewsii* and *S. 'Winifred Bevington'* do better with additional humus in the soil mix and a cool, shady aspect. *Saxifraga longifolia* appreciates a pane of glass over it if the winter is warm and wet to protect the centre of the rosette which can rot in such conditions.

It is important to provide some shelter from the midday sun but not by overhanging trees. Provide shade by aspect (north-east) or by careful placing of rock work. *Saxifraga longifolia*, *S. callosa* and *S. cotyledon* all need careful spacing as they produce panicles up to 60cm in length, which arch over and need room to display themselves.

Saxifraga 'Tumbling Waters' can produce flowering spikes over 90cm in length. The best way to achieve this is to grow a rosette in a pot for a year or two, encouraging it to become as large as possible by feeding and removing all side rosettes. Because the parent rosette will die after flowering it is important to pot up the side rosettes to ensure a continuous supply of future flowering plants.

Plants in the Southside Seedling Group such as 'Slack's Ruby Southside' and 'Southside Star' also benefit from additional feed.

Troughs make an ideal home for the smaller species. *Saxifraga cochlearis* is excellent for this purpose as is *S. paniculata* var. *minutifolia* which will huddle amongst the rock crevices. *Saxifraga crustata* too is a good plant for a trough. Many forms are small and very heavily encrusted and look particularly effective when covered in frost in winter.

For the larger scree and rock garden why not try *S. hostii* subsp. *hostii* (syn. *S. altissima*; *S. ploeckensis*). This plant will even grow in an ordinary border. *Saxifraga paniculata* has many named cultivars worth considering. A combination of *S. paniculata* 'Rosea', 'Lutea' and 'Lagraveana', all AGM holders, gives a very pleasing effect.

Pests

There are only two major pests that attack silver saxifrages; vine weevil and molluscs. In the open garden, vine weevil is not really a problem. In pots, it can be controlled with proprietary vine weevil killer, either as a drench or in specialised compost. If plants are re-potted in July the problem becomes minimal. Any pot with a problem can be emptied immediately and the offenders removed, usually leaving plenty of propagating material.

Molluscs can be a particular nuisance as they tend to browse on the centre of rosettes and leaves, especially in mild, wet winters. Again, the cushions can be sprayed against these pests. It is the tiny slugs that hide in cushions that do most of the damage.

Diseases

This group of saxifrages can occasionally be affected by a form of rust (*Puccinia pазschei*), which has probably been affecting the plants since they evolved. Two cultivars of *S. × engleri* (*S. crustata* × *S. hostii*), *S. 'Silver Maid'* and 'Carniolica' seem most vulnerable. Pulling off the affected leaves or rosettes will often cure the problem.

In wet and humid conditions a form of wet rot attacks the centre of the rosettes, particularly if the drainage is poor. Plants growing in the garden usually recover but those in pots are better for a little winter protection. If frames are used do make sure that there is plenty of air movement by raising the frames a little. In summer the plants do not mind excess moisture.

RHS Award of Garden Merit descriptions



Mike Sleigh

Notes on descriptions

Plant size varies according to growing conditions e.g. amount of light, moisture, temperature, and also geographical situation e.g. hot south-east, mild and damper north-west. The number of flower spikes per plant is also variable, dependent upon the number of mature rosettes. Colour references are from the 1995 reprinted edition of the RHS Colour Chart. See page 11 for list of senders.

Measurements of 'Slack's Ruby Southside', were of plants grown by Beryl Bland.

Saxifraga cochlearis 'Minor'

🏆 AGM (H4) 1993 reconfirmed 2003

Senders: 2, 4, 8, 9, 16

A charming form of *S. cochlearis* with tiny, heavily silvered rosettes and many dainty panicles of white bell-like flowers.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, recurved, to 20mm diameter.

Leaves To 18mm long, 4mm wide (mostly much smaller), spatulate, apex obtuse, margins entire or slightly crenate, greyed-dark green (137B) reverse paler green (139B/C). Hydathodes between upper and lower leaf surface.

Flower spike Open panicles to 150mm long, green flushed red, glandular in lower half, slender. Primary branches very slender to 20mm, smooth, reddish, occasional sparse glands, typically with only 1 flower.

Flowers Bell-shaped flowers up to 24 per spike, distributed over upper half of spike. Petals white, 7mm x 3mm, 3-veined with a few purplish-red spots (64A) at base of veins, with yellow nectary ring. No scent. Flowering May to July.



Saxifraga callosa subsp. *callosa* var. *australis* 'Superba'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Sender: 13

Arching panicles of white flowers and beautiful silvery rosettes, especially in spring.

Plants Multi-rosetted, neat, regular; rosettes to 50mm diameter.

Leaves Narrowly oblanceolate 24–45mm long, 4mm wide at base, 2mm in centre and 4–5mm wide at tip. Apex slightly acute. Lower leaves recurved and markedly longer than main rosette leaves. Hydathodes between upper and lower surface of the leaf. Leaves moderate olive-green (146A) paler on reverse (146C), base purple-red (64A)

Flower spike To 170mm long, green, tinged red, arching; primary branches to 20mm long, up to 20 per spike each with 3–7 upward facing flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 20mm diameter, white with a few small greyed purplish-red (58A) spots at base of petal, nectary ring lime-green; flowers slightly cup-shaped with gently arching petals. No scent. Flowering from mid-April to mid-June.



Saxifraga × *gaudinii* 'Canisdalmatica'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 4, 6, 11 and 12

A very attractive, sweetly-scented cultivar with white flowers heavily spotted red over the entire petal.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate, 60mm diameter

Leaves Oblong to obovate, apex obtuse, margins serrate, 36mm long, 6mm wide; dark yellowed-green (146B/C), tinged greyed burgundy red (59B) at edge and tip. Hydathodes at base of teeth on upper leaf edge.

Flower spike To 280–480mm long, erect, green, glandular; primary branches 60mm long, up to 10 per spike each with an average of 3 flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 15mm diameter, white with dark red spots (60A) evenly distributed over rounded petals; yellow-green nectary ring. Sweetly scented. Flowering from late May to early July.





***Saxifraga* 'Monarch'**

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Sender: 14

A lusty garden hybrid with petals heavily spotted dark red towards the base.

Plants Multi-rosetted in a fairly loose cushion; rosettes large, upright 40-170mm in diameter.

Leaves Linear/oblong 54mm long, 10mm wide, serrate/dentate with a hydathode in the upper surface of each serration, slightly acute apex. Leaves on flowering rosettes much larger. Colour yellow-green (147B), paler reverse (147C).

Flower spike To 500mm long, green with very slight blush of red, erect; up to 25 primary branches per spike, 110mm long each with average of 9 flowers and distributed over upper 3/4 of the spike length.

Flowers To 18mm diameter, white with pale burgundy red (59C) stippled base and lime green nectary ring. Sweetly scented. Flowering mid-May to late June.



***Saxifraga paniculata* 'Lutea'**

🏆 AGM (H4) 1993 reconfirmed 2003

Senders: 2, 3, 8, 9, 12, 16

Pale green rosettes with attractive pale yellow flowers borne on reddish stems.

Plants: Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate, large, to 50mm diameter, somewhat incurving

Leaves To 32mm long, 4-5mm wide, linear, almost strap-shaped with a moderately pointed apex. Margins serrate, hydathodes on upper surface at the base of each tooth, moderate yellow green (146B)

Flower spike To 250mm long, erect, green blushed pink, glandular; primary branches with an average of 2 flowers, up to 10 per spike and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 15mm diameter, pale yellow (3C) becoming paler (2D) almost white with age; lemon yellow nectary ring. No scent. Flowering early May to late June.



***Saxifraga paniculata* 'Lagrangeana'**

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 3, 4

A lovely small form of *S. paniculata*. White flowers with a distinctive bright yellow centre.

Plants Multi-rosetted, low spreading cushions; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate, small, flattened, 15-20mm in diameter.

Leaves To 10mm long, 4mm wide, oblanceolate, light greyish-yellow green (191A) with sharp marginal serrations sometimes with a pink blush on the upper margins of basal leaves. Hydathodes on upper surface at edge of leaf.

Flower spike To 170mm long, erect, very slightly blushed red; primary branches to 35mm long, up to 7 per spike each with 2 flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 20mm diameter, white with distinctive bright yellow nectary ring. No scent. Flowering from early May to late June.



Peter Bland

***Saxifraga paniculata* 'Rosea'**

🏆 AGM (H4) reconfirmed 2003

Senders: 2, 14, 16

A reliable cultivar with lovely deep rose-red buds and rose-red flowers which fade to pink.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes, sometimes rather one-sided, rosulate, to 20mm diameter. Centre of rosettes mid-green (143C) becoming darker (137A) towards centre of rosette and outer most leaves. Leaf margins tinged greyed burgundy red (59A/C).

Leaves To 12mm long, 5mm wide, oblong to oblanceolate, apex acute, margins serrate. Hydathodes on upper leaf surface at the base of each tooth.

Flower spike To 240mm long, erect, red; primary branches to 45mm long, up to 5 per spike each with 2 flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 8mm diameter, rose-pink (54C) fading to soft pink, with a lime-green nectary ring; deep rose-pink in bud. Petals oval. No scent. Flowering from May to mid-June.



RHS Award of Garden Merit descriptions



Saxifraga paniculata 'Venetia'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 9, 12

A tiny form with ruby red backs to the leaves and numerous gleaming white flowers on wiry, delicate, red stems.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate, to 13mm diameter, olive green (147C).

Leaves Oblong to oblanceolate, 9mm long, 3mm wide. Reverse of leaves a deep ruby red (60A), which is one of the main attractions of this plant.

Apex acute, margins serrate.

Hydathodes on upper surface at base of teeth.

Flower spike To 160mm long, erect, red, glandular; primary branches to 6 per spike each with 2 flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 10mm diameter, white, oval petals with creamy-yellow nectary ring. No scent. Flowering from mid-May to late June.

Peter Bland



Saxifraga (Southside Seedling Group) 'Slack's Ruby Southside'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Sender: 10

A very striking plant with white petals splashed ruby red across the centre.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, slightly rosulate, to 50mm diameter.

Leaves To 26mm long, 8mm wide, oblanceolate to broadly spatulate, apex acuminate, margins serrate; mid-green (147A/B) becoming paler towards base (145C), base blushed red (51A). Red blush also on reverse and in winter occurring on upper leaf surface.

Flower spike Broad panicle, flowers along almost entire length of spike, 12-23 flowers per primary branch (over 500 flowers per panicle).

Flowers Petals white, very heavily blotched across the centre, with rich dark ruby-red (60A) tip and base; 7mm x 4mm narrowing at base to 2mm, claw-shaped and widely separated. Anthers pink. No scent. Flowering late May to end June.



Michael Mitchell



Saxifraga (Silver Farreri Group) 'Reginald Farrer'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Sender: 13

Beautiful arching panicles of white flowers and silvery rosettes.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes rather small 25-44mm, recurving, very silvery in spring.

Leaves To 29-36mm long, 3-6mm wide, linear/oblanceolate. Moderate yellow-green (146B/C), base moderate purple-red (64A). Hydathodes set in margin, margin entire.

Flower spike To 200mm long, red, arching; primary branches to 40mm long, up to 20 per spike each with 2-3 upward facing flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 15mm diameter, white with faint red stippling towards petal base (paler than 45C); nectary ring lime-green. No scent. Flowering from mid-May to late June.

Peter Bland



Saxifraga (Silver Farreri Group) 'Snowflake'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 9, 12, 13

Distinctive 'irregular' rosettes with spoon-shaped leaves. Upward facing, glistening snow-white flowers in delicate panicles.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes irregular, recurved to 38mm diameter, dark yellowed-green (146A) becoming mid-green (143C) towards centre.

Leaves Oblanceolate to spatulate, 25mm long, 3mm wide at broadest point, apex acute to right-angled, margins entire, notched, hydathodes in margin.

Flower spike To 150mm long, green, slightly blushed red, arching; primary branches to 30mm long, up to 18 per spike each with 2-4 upward facing flowers and distributed over upper 2/3 of spike.

Flowers To 15mm diameter, white with a row or patch of delicate greyed burgundy red spots (59B) towards base of petal; nectary ring yellow-green. No scent. Flowering from mid-May to mid-April.



Peter Bland



Saxifraga (Southside Seedling Group) 'Southside Star'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 1, 12

Delightful white flowers heavily blotched with red in the lower half of each broad petal.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate in centre, recurved outer leaves, to 70mm diameter, dark green (147A) becoming lighter (144C) towards centre of rosette, tinged greyed burgundy red 59A/B.

Leaves Oblong to spatulate, apex acute to obtuse, margins serrate (sharp and fine). Hydathodes on surface of leaf at base of teeth.

Flower spike To 240mm long, arching; primary branches to 60mm long, up to 14 per spike, each with 7–14 upward facing flowers and distributed over almost the entire length of flower stem.

Flowers To 20mm diameter, white with burgundy red blotch (53A) at base of spatulate petals; nectary ring lime-green. No scent. Flowering from mid-May to end June.



Saxifraga 'Whitehill'

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 4, 12

Silvery blue rosettes reddened at the centre which gives the plants a ruby glow. Pure white flowers.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes symmetrical, rosulate, recurved outer leaves, to 25mm diameter, light greyed green (138B), centre greyed purplish-red (58A) at base and in young rosettes.

Leaves To 12mm long, 5mm wide, oblanceolate (some spatulate); apex obtuse, margin serrate. Hydathodes on margin.

Flower spike To 240mm long, erect to arching, red, glandular; primary branches to 50mm long, up to 10 per spike each with typically 3 flowers and distributed over upper half of spike.

Flowers To 12mm diameter, pure white becoming dull with age; yellow nectary ring, petals oval. No scent.

Flowering from mid-May to early July.



Peter Bland



Saxifraga 'Tumbling Waters'

🏆 AGM (H4) reconfirmed 2003

Senders: 1, 4, 7, 10, 11, 16

A cultivar which, if grown with a little care, will reward with magnificent arching panicles of numerous pure white flowers. Neat, compact rosettes become very silvery in spring.

Plants Multi-rosetted; rosettes to 120mm diameter, symmetrical, recurved.

Leaves To 35mm long, 5mm wide (outer leaves longer to 60mm long, 6mm wide). Linear to oblanceolate, apex acute, margins entire/notched. Greyed dark green (137A), paler on reverse 139D. Hydathodes on margin (lots of silvery over leaf in spring).

Flower spike To 500mm long, arching to drooping; numerous primary branches, each to 100mm long with an average of 10 flowers and distributed along almost entire length of the spike.

Flowers To 15mm diameter, pure white with bright yellow nectary ring. Petals spatulate. Slightly scented. Flowering late May to July.



Saxifraga 'Winifred Bevington'

Intersectional hybrid between Ligulatae and Gymnopera.

🏆 AGM (H4) 2003

Senders: 2, 7, 11

Starry pink-flushed flowers and shiny green rosettes, like a miniature London pride. Delicate and 'frothy'.

Plants Multi-rosetted, neat; rosettes symmetrical, to 30mm diameter, rosulate at centre, recurved at edges. Centre of rosette yellowed-green (144B) becoming darker (147A) towards edge, slightly tinged greyed burgundy red (59B) at margins.

Leaves Elliptic, apex acute, 12mm long, 6mm wide, margins crenate, hydathodes visible on upper edges of crenations.

Flower spike To 170mm long, erect, red, glandular; up to 7 primary branches per spike, each with 6–7 flowers and distributed over upper third of spike.

Flowers To 10mm diameter, star-shaped, white blushed pale pink (65A/B) becoming paler with age; a patch of deep pink (67B) and stippling at base of petal; flower buds rich pink (67D); yellow nectary ring. Petals oval. No scent. Flowering from mid-May to mid-July.



Silver Saxifrage selection guide

AGM 2003	Flowers	Scent	Troughs	Raised beds/walls	Scree/rock garden	Pots/alpine house	Comments
<i>S. callosa</i> subsp. <i>callosa</i> var. <i>australis</i> 'Superba'	White with faint red stippling	None		●		●	Beautiful silvery rosettes
<i>S. cochlearis</i> 'Minor'	White with faint red stippling	None	●			●	Tiny, silver encrusted leaves
<i>S. × gaudinii</i> 'Canis-dalmatica'	White with red stippling over entire petal	Sweetly scented		●	●		Parents believed to be <i>S. cotyledon</i> × <i>S. paniculata</i> 'Balcana'. A vigorous garden hybrid.
<i>S.</i> 'Monarch'	White with dark red stippling	Sweetly scented			●		Mixes well with larger alpine.
<i>S. paniculata</i> 'Lagaveana'	White with bright yellow eye	None		●	●		Very floriferous and dependable.
<i>S. paniculata</i> 'Lutea'	Soft pale yellow	None		●	●	●	Pale green leaves
<i>S. paniculata</i> 'Rosea'	Rose-pink fading to pale pink	None		●	●		Reliable cultivar. Looks good with 'Lagaveana' and 'Lutea'
<i>S. paniculata</i> 'Venetia'	White	None	●	●		●	Tiny form, reverse of leaves a ruby red
<i>S.</i> (Silver Farreri Group) 'Reginald Farrer'	White with faint red stippling	None	●	●		●	A hybrid between <i>S. cochlearis</i> and <i>S. callosa</i> .
<i>S.</i> (Silver Farreri Group) 'Snowflake'	White with faint red stippling	None	●	●		●	Distinctive rosettes, greener than <i>S. cochlearis</i> . Very good in the Alpine House.
<i>S.</i> (Southside Seedling Group) 'Slack's Ruby Southside'	White with ruby red blotching	None		●	●		Prefers a cooler, moist position and an acid or neutral soil with extra humus. Responds well to additional feed.
<i>S.</i> (Southside Seedling Group) 'Southside Star'	White with ruby red blotching	None		●	●		Prefers a cooler, moist position and an acid or neutral soil with extra humus. Responds well to additional feed.
<i>S.</i> 'Tumbling Waters'	Pure white	Slightly scented		●	●	●	A superb plant. Needs to be propagated from side rosettes regularly
<i>S.</i> 'Whitehill'	Pure white	None	●	●	●	●	An excellent foliage plant. Particularly effective after a heavy frost due to the decorative edges of the leaves.
<i>S.</i> 'Winifred Bevington'	White, blushed pale pink.	None	●			●	A delightful little plant for a humus rich trough. Prefers a cooler situation.
Other notable cultivars							
<i>S.</i> 'Esther'	Soft yellow flowers fading to white and sprinkled with pink dots	–		●	●	●	Brilliant encrusted lime-green foliage with arching sprays of soft yellow flowers sprinkled with pink dots. A lovely plant.
<i>S.</i> 'Hare Knoll Beauty'	Deep red in bud, then deep rose fading to palest pink.	–	● also tufa			●	The fading of the flowers gives a two-toned look contrasts with small rosettes of silvery blue leaves. The petals have a dark red flush in the throat. Planted in tufa the plant will remain very compact.
<i>S. paniculata</i> var. <i>minutifolia</i>	White	–	●			●	Tiny, huddled, silvery grey rosettes, the smallest of all. Ideal in a trough or crevice.
<i>S.</i> 'Rainsley Seedling' (syn. 'Rainsley')	Flowers rich-creamy borne on small compact panicles.	–	Tufa		●		A very good plant for tufa in a trough. The incurved rosettes are glaucous-blue with a soft milky bloom.
<i>S.</i> 'Saint John's'	Creamy white, peppered with pink dots	–	●	●	●	●	Heavily beaded silvery rosettes attractive throughout the year. A <i>crustata</i> hybrid.

Rock Garden Plant Trials Sub-committee

The Sub-committee is made up of plantsmen, nurserymen, experts and enthusiastic amateurs who give their time voluntarily to promote garden plants for gardeners. Those who judged this trial were:

Chairman:	Peter Erskine
Co-opted Members:	Beryl Bland Adrian Young
Members:	Mary Randall Joy Bishop Chris Brickell Peter Cunnington Kath Dryden Alan Edwards Tony Hall Brian Mathew Michael Upward

Senders of silver saxifrages to the trial:

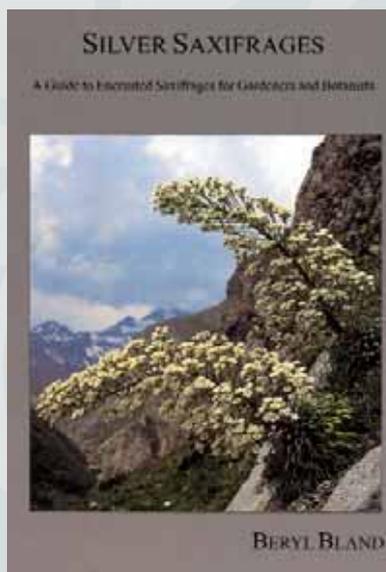
- 1 Aberconwy Nursery, Graig, Glan Conwy, Colwyn Bay, Conwy, Wales LL28 5TL
- 2 Blackthorn Nursery, Kilmeston, Alresford, Hampshire SO24 0NL
- 3 Bramley Cottage Alpines, Bramley Cottage, Back Lane, Waldron, Heathfield, East Sussex TN 21 0NH
- 4 Cambridge Alpines, 20 Paget Place, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7DR
- 5 The Alpine Plant Centre, Fir Croft, Froggett Road, Calver, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 3ZD
- 6 Lydford Alpine Nursery, 2 Southern Cottages, Lydford, Okehampton, Devon EX20 4BL
- 7 Oakdene Nursery, Street End Lane, Broad Oak, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 8TU
- 8 Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, 20A Inverleith Row, Edinburgh EH8 7EP
- 9 Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB
- 10 Slack Top Alpines, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 7HA
- 11 W E Th. Ingwersen Ltd, Birch Farm Nursery, Gravetye, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 4LE
- 12 Royal Horticultural Society, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB
- 13 Mrs B Bland, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 14 Mr A Young, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 15 Mr B Burrow, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 16 Mr T Hale, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 17 Mr K Moorhouse, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 18 M P Pechoux, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 19 Mr G van den Beuken, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley
- 20 Mr R F Beeston, c/o RHS Garden, Wisley

Acknowledgements

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John Hornby



Beryl Bland, a schoolteacher by profession, is a well-known member of the Alpine Garden Society who has made extensive studies of the silver saxifrages both in cultivation and in the wild. She has been a keen grower of all types of saxifrages for more than thirty years, researching the silver saxifrages for the past 15 years.

Beryl holds the National Plant Collection of the section Ligulatae (silver saxifrages) and in 1999 her collection was awarded Scientific Status by the NCCPG for excellence in the field of research. She is the author of the monograph on Silver Saxifrages published by The Alpine Garden Society in 2000. In addition she has contributed many articles to The Saxifrage Magazine and has also written for The Alpine Gardener (AGS), and The Rock Garden (SRGC).

She was co-opted to the Rock Garden Plant Trials Sub-committee for the Silver Saxifrage Trial to advise on nomenclature. As well as frequent lectures in the UK she has also lectured on saxifrages in the Czech Republic, Holland and Norway. The RHS would like to thank Beryl Bland for her generosity with her time and knowledge, both during the trial and in the writing of this bulletin.

Adrian Young, With thanks also to Adrian Young for his significant contribution as a co-opted member of the Sub-committee and sender to trial. Adrian holds the National Plant Collection for Saxifraga subsections Kabschia and Engleria.

The Royal Horticultural Society

The RHS is the UK's leading gardening charity dedicated to advancing horticulture and promoting good gardening. Its charitable work includes providing expert advice and information, advancing horticulture, training the next generation of gardeners, helping school children learn about plants, and conducting research into plants, pests and environmental issues affecting gardeners. The RHS AGM plant trial scheme is an important part of this work.

The RHS receives no government grants and for every pound received from members' subscriptions we need to raise more than twice as much again to fund our charitable work. We also rely on donations and sponsorship to supplement income from our garden operations, flower shows, shops and plant centres.

RHS Plant Trials

With so many different types of gardener and so many different cultivars available to them in each group of plants, it is important that a system of recommendation is in place to help with selection at point of sale. These recommendations must be clear and reliable to ensure that of the thousands of plants available in the UK, a proportion are known to be excellent garden plants. The RHS provides this information through its extensive programme of plant trials held at RHS gardens in the UK. The RHS Award of Garden Merit  signifies the selection of the best plant for general garden use.

RHS plant trials serve the professional gardener who wants to know the range of plants available, including the latest breeding and selection programmes, with their distinctive characteristics and provenance. They also serve the amateur who wants to know which plants will grow and perform well in a particular garden situation.

The RHS has an unrivalled resource of knowledge and expertise and is therefore best placed to conduct plant trials for the UK gardening market.

RHS Herbarium

The RHS Herbarium keeps a record of trial cultivars as dried specimens with detailed descriptions and photographic images. This forms an important reference for the horticultural industry. Any new cultivars are highlighted and a Standard Specimen is preserved and described.

The RHS Herbarium, stored at RHS Garden Wisley, is the largest active horticultural herbarium in the world. At present the collection contains about 80,000 herbarium specimens and over 30,000 images of plants. Material is actively collected from a wide spectrum of sources including RHS plant trials.

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