



# THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY CENTRAL SUSSEX GROUP



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2008

## JOHN HUGHES - PLANTS AROUND CHILLAN (C. CHILE)

An interest in cacti and alpines first took John to Chile in 2001, returning there on other occasions since. One journey took him to Chillan 250 miles south of Santiago, a city founded in 1589 but twice moved following earthquakes and rebuilt following another in 1939. It was the birthplace of Chile's soldier and statesman Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842) who became a leading figure in the movement for emancipation from Spain and the first head of an independent Chilean Republic and of the pianist Claudio Arrau. Its cathedral with eleven arches is deemed to be earthquake proof.



*Puya berteroniana*

We first moved west to the rocky, volcanic beach coastline, subject to morning fog arising from the cold Humboldt current. On the rocks the Bromeliad *Puya berteroniana*, its stem stalks producing a fibre used in textiles, *Eryngium yuccifolium* with strap-like leaves, the succulent *Nolana petiolata* and a form of the Hottentot Fig *Carpobrotus edulis*. On a grassy bank *Lobelia tupa* with felted foliage and brick-red to orange flowers; six feet high the bee pollinated Devil's Tobacco was this August's plant of the month at Rosemoor.

There were thousands of red flowered *Rhodophiala* and just one yellow and one yellow splashed red.

Moving back 52 miles east of Chillan to Las Tracas (257/264) at the foot of the Andes and the Hotel Pirineos. [This appears to be part of or close to the skiing resort of Termas de Chillan with thermal baths (257/264); in any event both have the Volcan Chillan as a backdrop]. In *Nothofagus pumilio* forest, pale violet and white daisies of *Leucheria viscida* and creeping, yellow flowered *Viola reichii* at 5360ft.. 500ft. higher, steaming fumaroles and in tufted grassland, veined yellow *Sisyrinchium cuspidatum* (*arenarium*).



*Sisyrinchium cuspidatum*





*Azorella cryptanthus*

*Gamocarpha alpina* form strange-looking small mounds, the tubular flowers five lobed. 4" tall *Senecio phenecia* carries yellow flowers. Quite common is the orchid *Chlorea viridiflora* with green spots on the mid petal. At 5900ft. large clumps of spiny *Azorella cryptantha*. There is succulent cream, pink flushed *Calandrinia graminifolia* in blocky ash and *C. affinis* (230/317, 257/266) in almost permanent water, the much branched *Nassauvia glomerata* (239/28) with small flower heads of white daisies, ubiquitous *Cerastium arvense*, by a waterfall liliaceous *Tristagma* which is related to *Ipheion*, glossy 1½" yellow flowered *Ranunculus peduncularis* (238/300) with black anthers. Farther up the path large yellow flowered *Mimulus luteus*, white *Viola cotyledon*

(216/118 & 128-30, 257/331-34) flowers in a ring at leaf tip level. At 5970ft. prostrate rock draping *Berberis polymorpha*, an Indian Bread the fungus *Cyttaria magellanica* on its *Nothofagus* host. By another waterfall *Ourisia poeppigii* and on to a ridge at 6300ft. with the realisation that it was time to descend on the reckoning of 5½ hours up to 1½ to 2 down, but time to see *Viola cotyledon* (229/251) and *Valeriana macrorrhiza* (230/323). On the descent white flowered *Caltha andicola* (180/141) with arrow-



*Cyttaria. on Nothofagus betuloides*



*Stachys grandidentata*

shaped foliage, violet and white *Lathyrus multiceps*, *Celceolaria andina*, pale pink and white *Stachys grandidentata* and *Schizanthus hookerianum*. A view of a vertical cascade, the tangerine lanterns of a stinging *Loasa* and *Alstromeria versicolor* (299/108). By the roadside the ground hugging, leguminous *Adesmia parviflora* (229/250) with at best. blue-violet flowers and a spiky cactus *Maihuenia poeppigii* (179/80)

a spiky cushion with silky lemon-yellow flowers and strange seed pods.



*Maihuenia poeppigii*

Next to the Hotel Los Pirineos, a 6 mile walk leads to Shangri-la (179/82, 180/139-49 257/265), an old climbing centre with several buildings and aero chairs left in 1975 when a lava flow from the volcano crossed at least one road which remained



*Pozoa volcanica*

blocked. Shangri-la is especially good for its *Mutisia decurrens* (257/345). In pure volcanic ash large flowered *Rhodophiala* and what appeared to be an *Embothrium* with burnt-orange and yellow flowers, *Calandrinia graminifolia* or *C. tenuifolia* with felted grey-green foliage, the odd umbellifer *Pozoa volcanica* and *Chlorea* including *C. magellanica* (257/261, 71/193), *Geum andicola*, 3ft. ferns, white flowered *Armeria maritimum* ssp. *andina*, the Mountain Tulip *Chlorea alpina* (180/147, 288/168) with huge yellow flowers and what appeared to be spaghetti on a tree – some sort of parasite.

We have to admire those who find their way around unfamiliar countries in search of plants,, especially those who take photos and give their time to describe what they have experienced. Thank you John!

Fortunately there are many reminders of Chile and other parts of the Andes in the Bulletin – the specific references above (e.g. 180/147 etc) will lead to other information. There were two recent Patagonian articles in the Scottish Rock Garden 116 and 117 (January & July 2006).

For those on the internet. the following might be of interest.

[http://www.mapasdechile.com/flora\\_region08/index.htm](http://www.mapasdechile.com/flora_region08/index.htm)

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/EART/vegmaps4.html>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/stationalpinejosephfourier/sets/72157603191404825/detail/>

(Volcan Chillan flora)

[http://www.nhbs.com/flora\\_silvestre\\_de\\_chile\\_zona\\_central\\_tefno\\_13704.html](http://www.nhbs.com/flora_silvestre_de_chile_zona_central_tefno_13704.html)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flora\\_of\\_Chile](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flora_of_Chile)

<http://www.chileflora.com/>

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

**RM**

**MEETING 15 NOVEMBER**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

followed by

**JOHN HUMPHRIES**

**THE ALPINE GARDEN SOCIETY'S**  
**"ALPINES FOR ALL ASPECTS"**  
**EXHIBIT AT THE 2008 CHELSEA SHOW**

John was one of the leading players at this year's Chelsea Show which gained not only another Gold Medal, but the President's Award for the best display in the Great Pavilion. So a chance to see and hear something of the enormous effort needed to create the team's prodigious display.

