

AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume No. 3, Issue No. 4

apsdev.org

September 2009



Bob McFarlane's Hoop House

Dwayne Dickerson

A PROPAGATING EXPERIENCE

Bob McFarlane, Denver

When Val asked if I would write an article on my penstemon propagation experiences this past year I agreed but only with some trepidation, since so many of you have had so much more experience in this area than I. By way of some background, my wife and I have been growing penstemons for the past ten years. We also have been collecting wild penstemon seed for several years and I have been trying to propagate penstemon from seed for the past five or six years.

My original efforts were very spotty and not particularly successful. Major problems included no or very low germination, damping off of new seedlings, losing many plants after

pricking up due, I think, to lack of water and too much direct hot sunlight.

In addition, I never had a comfortable place to grow the plants after they were pricked up into small plastic pots. I tried a number of different things, mostly suggested by many of you, and things improved but I was still not satisfied. I also felt very tied down in raising the small plants during late spring and early summer when I would like to have been doing other things, such as traveling to see wildflowers in bloom.

After doing more reading, talking with others, and studying, I decided that I would try two approaches to improve propagation. First, I would try a hopefully more scientific method in attempting to improve seed germination and secondly, I would build a hoop house complete with a sun screen and watering system to try and reduce the

loss of the smaller plants. Both of these were accomplished and reported on here.

Hoop House.

Hoop houses have been used for many years, mainly to extend the growing season for plants in some areas. They are constructed quite simply with twenty foot lengths of PVC pipe bent into the shape of an inverted "U" by placing one end of the pipe over a two foot long piece of iron or steel rod that has been hammered into the ground and then bending the pipe to fit over another similar rod placed about ten or twelve feet away. By using several such "hoops" spaced six feet or so apart and connecting these by fastening two or three smaller diameter PVC pipes to the larger ones one has constructed a basic hoop house.

The final steps are to cover the structure with some material and in many cases construct a simple door on one end to enclose the hoop house. This is the procedure used by many who use these houses to extend the growing season. They generally use a clear plastic material for the covering material.

There are several good designs on the internet. I simply googled "hoop house" and found several. I used the basic design from one developed at New Mexico State University at Las Cruces. However, my objective was not to extend the growing season but to provide a better place to grow penstemons. For this reason, my hoop house was quite a bit easier to construct and not very expensive.

I didn't use any of the plastic covering or any doors but used only a 50% sunlight reduction green knit material, used by nurseries and growers, to cover the top in order to reduce the amount of sunlight reaching the plants. It is tied on to the house with plastic strip ties and easy to take down in the winter and put up again in the summer. The hoops and the connectors stay up in all year. With nothing on the sides or ends air can circulate freely inside the house. Also, the top, while made of net material does protect the plants from heavy rainfall. I'm not sure about heavy hail but believe that it will handle moderate size hail without a problem.

I reduced the size of the materials recommended in the New Mexico State design because of the reduced size of the structure. I reduced the diameter of PVC hoops to two inches and the smaller connecting PVC to one inch. The hoop house is about twelve feet square and just over seven feet at its tallest point. It is quite roomy and has good head room.

I added a simple watering system with three sprinklers hanging from plastic piping (the type used in garden drip systems) connected to the top of the structure. It is connected to our garden watering system and can be set to water independently from the rest of the system.

The final addition was the purchase of four used six by three foot collapsible tables (the type used by many churches) for about \$5 each. The total cost of the hoop house including everything was just under \$300.

Propagation Procedures

Seed was soaked 24 to 48 hours or until it sank. Seed requiring stratification was placed in a zip-lock baggie with a little vermiculite and enough water to dampen the mixture thoroughly, labeled and placed in the refrigerator. Seed that didn't require stratification was placed in a plastic pot underneath a small covering of and on top of a soilless mixture of peat and vermiculite, labeled, and placed under florescent lighting in the garage.

The timing of starting the seed was determined by the stratification or germination times listed in "Growing Penstemons: Species, Cultivars, and Hybrids", by Wilde and Lindgren. I tried to schedule the plants to show themselves around the first of April.

Seed requiring stratification was removed from the fridge at the end of the estimated time required for stratification placed in a plastic pot in the same manner as described above for non stratified seed, labeled, and placed outside on the north (shady) side of our house and left there until about April 1 when it was transferred to the hoop house.

Another source of seed was some planted last year which didn't germinate. There were 22 pots of this which, after spending the summer and fall in a dry place in the garden were transferred again to the north side of the house for further stratification.

In inspecting the seed that was removed from the refrigerator, if there were signs of germination then the seeds were treated as above but put under lights in the garage instead of placing outside.

When the inside plants showed two sets of leaves and were about an inch high they were pricked out into 2 1/2 inch plastic pots or plastic 1 x 8" cones and kept under the florescent lighting in the garage. I used about 2/3 soilless mixture and 1/3 scoria for all pricked out plants and watered them almost every day but did not use any fertilizer or chemicals. All were removed to the hoop house around the first of April.

Problems

Damping off of the tiny seedlings while under lighting in the garage was the only major problem encountered. There were significant plant losses until a friend suggested that air circulation may be the problem. He suggested using a fan to keep the air circulating and this proved to be very successful. I researched anti-fungus chemicals but found out that ones that worked were too expensive. Some are over \$200 a gallon.

After solving the damping off problem I started additional seed from the species lost and was able to propagate all of them again.

Plant Development

After moving all the pots to the hoop house plant development accelerated although the rate for different species varied a great deal. Some species did not produce their first plant for quite a time after germination was supposed to occur. Many species took over 100 days. At the time of this writing (July) there are still plant species too small to prick out. One pleasant surprise has been that 20 out of the 22 species that didn't germinate in 2008 have germinated successfully this year.

We have had an unusually wet spring and early summer so the hoop house watering system has not been used on a daily basis. But it has been a great comfort to be able to set a schedule for watering and then be able to go off and look for flowers in the wild without worrying about the plants drying out. Also, our spring weather this year has been noticeably cooler than average so I'm not sure if the hoop house cover has been necessary up to now.

The great majority of plants in the hoop house are developing nicely and there have been few pricked out plants lost - probably less than 50 out of several hundred. The hoop house has proved to be a comfortable place to work and provides conditions agreeable to penstemon plant development. The roof has worked well to protect the small plants from sun as well as from damage from our heavy rains.

Results

The propagation results for 2009 are shown below and compared with results from 2007 and 2008 which didn't include the hoop house or refrigerator procedures.

Year	Year Seeds Started	No. Species Started	No. Species Germinated	No. Species Planted
'07	'07	65	46(71%)	37(57%)
'08	'08	61	37(60%)	31(51%)
'09	'08	22	20(91%)	20(91%)
	'09	96	89(93%)	85(89%)

Conclusions

1. Germination can be improved for plants requiring stratification with a combination of using time both in the refrigerator and outside.
2. 24 to 48 hours of soaking seeds seems to help in improving their germination.
3. Stratification often requires longer than one year and non-germinating seed should be held over for at least one more year for further stratification.
4. The use of a relatively inexpensive hoop house can improve the number of pricked out plants surviving to be planted in the garden and provides a more comfortable place to raise them in.
5. Damping off of plants in confined space such as in a closed garage can be improved by using a fan to improve air circulation.

APS 2009 -2010 SEED EXCHANGE CALL FOR PENSTEMON SEED DONATIONS

Louise Parsons, Corvallis, Oregon

Seed season is here. If you enjoy wild-collecting, now is the time to enjoy a seed-gathering trek to some beautiful penstemon spots. In most areas, penstemon seed will be collectible from mid-July until late September. Capsules may ripen in the garden a little sooner.

We are continuing the later donation deadline of December 1, 2009. However early contributions help to avoid the midnight oil and are greatly appreciated.

Timely donations help us to get the list out promptly. The sooner the seeds are in the hands of grateful members and planted, the better! I (Louise) will handle all aspects of the SeedEx this year.

Donations may consist of penstemon or closely-related species or hybrids from your garden, and/or those collected in the wild. Old seed is welcome, but please indicate collection year. Paintbrush and scrophularia have been welcomed in past years.

When gathering seed, look for capsules with hardened seeds, either brown or black. Capsules may be gathered when they begin to split open at the tops. If they are partially green, drying may be finished by placing each offering in a paper bag. Cutting stems (rather than pulling or breaking) prevents trauma. I like to use florist sheers. A nice, sharp, snip prevents seeds from scattering also. Penstemon seeds are irregularly shaped, so don't be dismayed if they look quite "dead". Texture is more telling than appearance. Infertile seed is very brittle - it turns to dust when rubbed with the fingers. Though penstemon seed keeps well, it is less likely to be spoiled by mold or pests if it is promptly removed from capsules and cleaned.

Please clean seeds as thoroughly as possible. A collection of sieves and spatter screens (for frying foods) from "dollar" or second-hand stores is handy for fast cleaning. Run seeds through until clean of detritus. "Winnowing" or gravity sorting on a large paper plate removes loads of debris. Tilt the plate slightly and use a sideways motion to gently roll seeds onto a second clean paper plate. This leaves the lighter debris behind.

Always keep a label with the batch in case you are interrupted. Office supply stores carry small paper envelopes for coin collectors, or order glassine envelopes from the NARGS books store online (NARGS.org).

Be sure to inspect envelopes for possible leaks. Mail is subject to being tumbled round and round. If there is even a tiny gap in a seed envelope, some will work its way out. Seeds in glassines, then placed in coin envelopes offer an excellent "backup" to prevent loss or mixing. Place your treasures in a large padded envelope or small box and they will arrive in fine condition. Note that the postal service now charges parcel rates for padded envelopes, no matter how small. Again, don't forget to label each packet of seed!

Please enclose a list of your donations including full name, including variety, subspecies or cultivar name, color and height if known, wild or garden collected, and county and state if wild. The seed lists will be sent out as soon as I can or by January 1, 2010 at the latest. My goal is to have the list out as early in December as possible.

Diserata: We have either run out of or are very low on the following plants. This list is not intended to be limiting in any way. All species are welcome. APS can always use extra seed for special projects or membership enhancement.

aridus low
barbatus *hyb. ex 'petit bouquet'*
caespitosus
cyathophorus
eriantherus very low
gairdneri
inflatus low

kunthii cherry red
kunthii unk. red hyb.
laricifolius
pachyphyllus v. *mucronatus*
parryi
ramaleyi very low
richardsoni v. *richardsoni*
rostiflorus
rupicola
saxosorum
tusharensis
virens
 davidsonii v. *menziesii*
 Sally's eggplant striped

If you are uncertain about ID, share "UFO" (Unidentified Flowering Object) Penstemon seeds anyway. Please include as much information as you can and we will attempt an ID. If available, you may include a pressed flower and/or other diagnostic plant parts.

Mail your donations ASAP to:

Louise Parsons
 1915 SE Stone Street
 Corvallis, OR US 97333

541-752-7515

Feel free to e-mail me at parsonst@peak.org with any questions or concerns. (Note that the e-mail does not spell my name correctly, so copy it carefully) Alternatively, feel free to contact me at my address above. I am happy to help out in any way that I can.



P. strictus Julie McIntosh Shapiro



Penstemon azureus

THREE PROPOSALS AWARDED SPECIAL PROJECT FUNDING

Barbara Lewis and Lynn Ackerman
Denver

Special Projects, for years an informal component of the American Penstemon Society, was given a more formal status with stated objectives and an annual budget in 2008.

With the stated objective of Special Projects being "To provide modest funding for one-year projects which will expand or otherwise contribute to promoting the enjoyment of penstemons," *A Call for Entries* was widely distributed in the spring of 2008 and five grant applications were received.

Three excellent grants were funded:

1. *Penstemons in the Home Garden Demonstration*

: Whitney Rooney, The Arboretum at Flagstaff

Objective: "To create a permanent and ongoing garden display that will educate our visitors on the placement of native Penstemon species in high elevation gardens through both signage and

demonstration. As an outcome of this project, we hope that our visitors will come to understand the benefits and ease of using native *Penstemon* in their home garden.”

2. *Pollination Biology of Penstemon Clutei, a Rare Endemic Beardtongue*

: Susan Nyoka, Ecological
Restoration Institute at Northern
Arizona University

Objective: “To identify the primary pollinators of Sunset Crater beardtongue (*Penstemon clutei*) and determine whether they are necessary to effect fruit production.”

3. *Graham’s Penstemon Habitat Preservation Project*

Erin Robertson and Andrea West
Center for Native Ecosystems

Objective: “Establishment of formally protected areas to preserve remaining Graham’s penstemon populations and habitat.”

Project directors will submit brief six-month progress reports and a final report. In addition, each project director has been invited to give a brief talk about the project at the 2010 APS annual meeting in Craig, CO. If the project director is unable to attend, we are hopeful they will submit a poster describing the project and its outcome.

2009 APS PHOTO CONTEST

Stephen Love, Aberdeen, Idaho

The American Penstemon Society announces its Second Annual Photo Contest for society members. We invite all penstemaniacs to submit their best photographs for consideration and judging.

Recognition will be given to the top three photographs in each category. These nine winning photographs will be published in the annual bulletin of the American Penstemon Society.

Additionally, a token monetary award will be given to winners, as follows:

1st place in each category- \$50

2nd place in each category- \$30

3rd place in each category- \$20

Submissions Procedures:

Submission deadline: November 1, 2009.

For ease of distribution during judging, photographs should be submitted in digital file format (preferably JPEG) as an attachment to an email or sent through the mail on a CD. Digital file entries should have sufficient resolution (file size of 1 mb or greater) to be printed in 8” X 10” format without loss of quality. Film derived pictures may be scanned and sent as digital files. (If you have pictures or slides but no way to scan them, please submit the originals we will make arrangements to have them scanned. The originals will be returned.)

Include the following information with the photograph:

Category of entry:

1. Penstemons in a natural setting
2. Penstemons in a garden, or
3. Penstemons & penstemaniacs at an annual meeting

Name and full address of the photographer (include a phone number and email address).

Subject species or cultivar name (if known).

Year the photograph was taken.

Location and/or event name associated with the subject.

Please submit photographs (**by November 1**) to:

Dr. Stephen Love
University of Idaho
Aberdeen R & E Center
1693 S 2700 W
Aberdeen, ID 83210
Email: slove@uidaho.edu

Contest Rules:

1. You must be a member of the American Penstemon Society to participate in the contest.
2. Photographs must contain images of penstemons, although penstemons can be a portion of a larger photographic subject.
3. Entries must be actual photographs taken with a digital or film camera. There is no restriction on the type of camera

or film used. Pictures may be color or black-and-white.

4. Pictures can be slightly enhanced or improved using routine developing or digital procedures (e.g. cropping, correcting color imbalances, or adjusting contrast). However, they should not be extensively altered (e.g. flower image inserted into an alternate or artificial background) or created using digital techniques.
5. Photographs must be entered in one of three categories:
 - a. Penstemons in a natural setting (pictures of penstemons growing in their natural environment)
 - b. Penstemons in the garden (pictures of penstemons in a cultivated situation, including a home landscape, botanical garden, etc.)
 - c. Penstemons and penstemaniacs at an annual meeting (pictures from annual meeting botanizing tours that can and should include both people and penstemons)
6. Within a contest year, each participant can enter only one photograph within any of the three categories, but may enter one photograph in all three categories, for a total of three maximum entries.

7. A photograph may be entered into the competition only one time, regardless of category. Once entered, photographs are ineligible for entry into future contests.
8. Photographic submissions must include written descriptive information, specifically species or cultivar names, location of subject(s), year the photograph was taken, and anything else that may be informative to the viewer.
9. All photographs will be judged by a rotating panel made up of three APS members, each with some expertise in the art of photography.
10. APS will not claim ownership of submitted photographs; however, by submitting photographs to the contest, the owner(s) agrees to allow publication of the pictures in the APS web site, bulletin, and newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS

James Baker
San Marcos, Texas

John and Marjorie Gerdes
Oro Valley, Arizona

Waldo R. Griffin
Los Altos, California



*The Wests with Their
Penstemon pseudospectabilis
and Agave harvardii*

JOAN AND TRUEL WEST MEMBERSHIP CO-CHAIRS

Val Myrick, Sonora, CA

Joan and Truel West are among the lucky few who live in the oldest town in America, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Joan has lived in their 3 acre hilltop home since 1964. They have gardened together for the last 25 years.

Living among the native pinions, junipers, and various native grasses at 7,000', they intensively garden on the acre surrounding their home while maintaining the rest of the property in its natural state. This outlying area receives favorite native additions from time to time, of course. If one looks closely, the ruts of the Santa Fe Trail can still be seen running through the blue gramma and little blue stem grasses.

The Wests came to APS through Joan's friendship with Ellen Wilde. The two met years ago through their activities with the New Mexico Native Plant

Society. Joan volunteered to help Ellen when she hosted the AS Annual Meeting and was hooked! Great job, Ellen!

Joan and Truel obtain most of their penstemons as plants from Bob Pennington and other friends. Penstemons can be found in their pond, rock, and cactus gardens. They also grow raspberries, apples, peaches, apricots, and cherries.

Truel, a retired engineer, is in charge of digging, transplanting, and operating the chainsaw. Joan, a retired psychologist, works with Truel on the planting, making sure the plants are compatible and have good homes.

When they are not gardening or traveling to exotic places, they ski, hike the high mountains, and visit their three grandchildren. Somehow, Truel, a tenor, manages to find time to sing in the Santa Fe Symphony Choir. We are quite lucky that they have chosen to invest their time and energy in APS!



The West's Koi Pond *Truel West*



Penstemon cardwellii *Ginny Maffitt*

CHASING THE WILD PENSTEMON UP THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Ginny Maffitt, Sherwood, Oregon
Photos by Author

Accepting President McFarlane's challenge to offer a local penstemon tour in addition to the Mexico trip of 2009, I planned a reprise of the trip I led in 2004 with Louise Parsons and Christine Ebrahimi. By leaving out a few stops and traveling with 9 instead of 45 folks, we were able to make a loop, from the Columbia Gorge and around Mt. Hood and back to the gorge by suppertime!

In November, 1986, the Friends of the Columbia Gorge accomplished the wonderful goal of having the gorge declared a National Scenic Area. This bans strip malls and billboards. It monitors land development decisions by local counties while conserving the over 700 plant species, wild animals, and timbered cliffs backed by snow-covered volcanoes. Straddling Oregon and Washington, the river is the second largest in the United States and home to many salmon runs.

We crossed the Columbia River at Cascade Locks into Washington over the Bridge of the Gods. Native lore recounts the destruction of the original bridge by lovesick volcano-gods lobbing hot lava boulders over the river, competing for Loowit's (Mt. St. Helen's) affections. It actually has a basis in fact as volcanic action broke a natural lava bridge thousands of years ago.

Turning east on Washington Highway 14, we soon encountered *Penstemon serrulatus*, clinging to steep lava cliffs. This handsome member of subgenus *Saccanthera* (sac-shaped anthers) has globular trusses of about 20 deep blue or purple flowers. Rarely, a white to pale blue plant shows up. It's one of the easiest species in cultivation, preferring forest duff with a slight elevation, and afternoon shade for its thin leaves. You can see Larry Owens trying to get a close-up without falling onto the highway.



Searchers *Ginny Maffitt*

Continuing east and upriver, we turned north into the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, driving to Big Lava. This is a continuous flow of lava over 50 miles square, where trees, shrubs and forbs defy the rocks to grow in miniaturized fashion. Our four-penstemon stop on Road 60 was at an old barrow (gravel) pit—typical penstemon behavior.



Penstemon serrulatus

P. subserratus appears on fairly level ground, but always with rocks beneath. Growing above 3000', its winter dormancy makes it difficult to grow in the maritime areas of the Northwest. Its name comes from the minute serrations ("sub" meaning less than serrate) on the leaves.

Four years ago, I ordered seed from a Russian botanist, who gave me a bonus pack of a "Chinese penstemon" from a botanic garden. Dr. Andy Wolfe swore to me there are no Asian penstemons! Three years of waiting produced plants with subserrate leaves, plus all the features of *P. subserratus*—what a disappointment! The flowers occur in the typical graduated clusters of subgenus *Penstemon*, section *Humilies*, about 10 per cluster. They can be a lovely blue or a bright violet on stems from 12-32".



P. subserratus flowers

Just uphill on the barrow pit, were *Penstemons rupicola*, *fruticosus* and *barrettiae*. Unfortunately, they were mostly done blooming. The *P. fruticosus* v. *fruticosus* and *barrettiae* have apparently ‘mixed it up’ over the years producing the resulting hybrids. The leaves are more green than glaucous like *P. fruticosus*, but more ovate than linear like *P. barrettiae*. I have grown these on and named them “*P. xGinny*”—see Dale Lindgren’s update of hybrids in the 2009 *APS Bulletin*. The flowers tend to sometime rebloom in summer.



Hybrid of *P. barrettiae* and *fruticosus* v. *fruticosus*

Going down the road about 3 miles, we carefully made our way between house-sized lava boulders to find *P. rupicola* and *fruticosus* actually still in bloom in the shaded areas. The *P. rupicola* becomes a trailing mat with roots finding minute toeholds in the lava. Its round, glaucous-blue leaves and brilliant pink flowers are long-lived in my garden when grown in mostly pumice or gravel.

Penstemon fruticosus v. *fruticosus*, one of three varieties mostly found in Washington, was found on flatter areas where more soil has been blown in over the ages. This is another long-lived member of subgenus *Dasanthera* and a

true sub shrub, sometimes more upright than mat-like (seen on Idaho trip, 2007). It is usually lavender to a pale violet with a lighter area on the palate and green, narrow, linear leaves, slightly serrate



P. fruticosus v. *fruticosus*

Returning to Hwy. 14 along the mighty Columbia, we began driving beside towering cliffs. In the rubble at the base or in the cracks, were *Penstemon richardsonii* v. *richardsonii* plants in bloom. Facing sturdily south in a land with about 10-15” of precipitation yearly, they form 24-30” shrubs loaded with pink or purple flowers. Also in subgenus *Saccanthera* (like *P. serrulatus* with sac-like anthers), there are 2 other varieties found in east, central Oregon.



P. richardsonii v. *richardsonii*

Alongside one plant was the most enormous *Eriogonum strictus* I've ever seen—a standout with silvery-blue leaves like an artemesia.



Eriogonum strictus

Penstemon barrettiae plants were also growing in the cliffs, but had bloomed in May. Arriving in Lyle, WA, we proceeded to Mo Miles' Milestone Nursery, where *P. richardsonii* was rioting down a hillside. Mo uses seeds of plants native to her land on Major Creek. She grows nothing but Columbia Gorge endemics, which she sells to the Forest Service and other agencies for re-vegetation projects. With 3-inch pots at \$1.50, we happily stocked up on (over 20 sp.) of penstemons, eriogonums, and the local golden currant. Lunch was eaten in the shade of large trees across the street and advantage taken of the grocery store facilities across the road!

Now in eastern Oregon and 90 miles from Troutdale, the sun was out and sweaters were off. We crossed the Columbia at The Dalles, Oregon and continued south on Hwy. 97, just passing the tiny farming village of Dufur. On the banks of a no-name creek is the most amazing group of *P. speciosus* I've ever seen. Alerted by our speaker on the 2003 trip, we had diverted the whole group and spent an hour in total penstemon worship.

Usually *P. speciosus* is various shades of blues and pinks, in an opalescent mix, stretching to 15" at most. Here it's a full 36" tall and appears either in breathtaking cobalts or royal purples. It's a member of subgenus *Habroanthus* whose anthers open at the outer ends. It's a four-state plant ranging from WA, OR, just into N. CA, and hitting the western edge of ID. I have no luck at all in blooming it—just not enough of the heat it craves!



Penstemon speciosus near Dufur, Oregon

The area was dry, hot and everyone was warned to watch for rattlers, but the flowers were magnificent. *P. richardsonii* was actually growing in the creek, with a white lily family species, *Triteleia grandiflora* in swathes nearby. Several species of buckwheat, plus a pink lupine and sidalcea were duly photographed. We wore bread bags over our socks to try and prevent the foxtail grass-seeds from attaching, but to no avail...all worth it to see *P. speciosus*!

Now we turned west toward home on Hwy. 44, which meets Mt. Hood's round-the-mountain road 28 miles away. It winds through a rich valley of farms and fields, gradually encountering ponderosa pine and then Douglas fir habitats. Here we found *P. euglaucus* in full bloom amid downed trees and manzanita bushes. Belonging to subgenus *Penstemon*, section *Proceri*, it has the tighter 'turtle-head' clusters of the more common *P. procerus*, but semi-glaucous leaves. Red skyrocket (*Ipomopsis aggregata*) and tiny *Delphinium nuttallii* rioted here also.



Ipomopsis aggregata

Continuing toward the mountain as the temperature began to drop, we stopped at the White River Glacier rest stop. Here in 2003 we saw purple *P. davidsonii* v. *davidsonii* and in a rare pink patch. Heavy rains in November, 2007, brought the glacier melting down in a torrent that washed out the rest stop, bridge and much of Hwy. 35 almost back to the Columbia River, 30 miles away. I was hoping we would find some remnants of the *P. davidsonii* and *serrulatus* population formerly here...we did. Neither was blooming, but everyone looked pretty pleased to find it amid the devastation.

P. davidsonii is found in 3 varieties including v. *menziesii* with finely serrated leaves ranging north into WA, and v. *praeteritis*, found only on the Steens Mountain and a tiny remnant in Nevada. It has oval leaves with teeth on the tips. The flowers are usually a deep purple, rarely in white or pink. They form one-inch deep mats, which can spread to 3' across, belonging to the 'shrubbies' in subgenus *Dasanthera*.

As dinnertime was drawing near, we raced around Mt. Hood, passing huge colonies of *P. cardwellii* (but in illegal parking areas), and up Lolo Pass—which is different than the one in Montana named by Captain Lewis! We passed many *P. serrulatus*, and then near the top of the pass near the famous Pacific Crest Trail, *P. cardwellii*.

It forms 2-8" deep mats of deep green, 2" long, serrated leaves and thrives in the highway shoulder's gravel.

Belonging to subgenus *Dasanthera* (we saw 5 of these that day), it has lived at least 10 years in my garden on steep slopes in lots of gravel and sun. It generously roots along the new tips in late spring and fall for fresh divisions.



Rhododendron macrophyllum and
Beargrass

Above us were pink *Rhododendron macrophyllum* and bear grass, the lily *Xerophyllum tenax*, whose leaves were woven by native peoples into long-lasting baskets. .

We agreed it was a fabulous, ELEVEN PENSTEMON day (including the hybrid) and departed for homes in

Oregon and Washington. I note that although we were only five days later than the June 15, 2003 tour, about ½ of the penstemons we saw were either further in bloom or nearly done blooming, even though the winter and spring were long and cool. Global warming strikes again!

POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

President:	Bob McFarlane, denvrbob@aol.com
Vice President:	Ginny Maffitt, maffitt@verizon.net
Treasure:	Dave Bentzin, APS.Treasurer@yahoo.com
Finance –Auditor:	Ed Godleski, e.godleski@csuohio.edu
Membership Sec.	Joan and Truel West, APS.Membership@yahoo.com (1-505) 988-9621 1050 Camino Rancheros Santa Fe, NM 87505
Membership	
Marketing	Dwayne Dickerson, dwaynedickerson@gmail.com
Past President	Louise Parsons, parsont@peak.org
Robins Coordinator	Ginny Maffitt, maffitt@verizon.net
Executive Board	Jill Pitman, penstemon@waitrose.com Julie McIntosh Shapiro, j.mci.shapiro@gmail.com Val Myrick, vkmyrick@pacbell.net
Director, Seed Ex.	Louise Parsons, parsont@peak.org
Registrar of Cultivars , and Hybrids	Dr. Dale Lindgren, dlindgren1@uni.edu
Nominating Comm. Chair:	Libby Wheeler, glwheel@prodigy.net
Librarian:	Dr. Stephen Love, slove@uidaho.edu
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