



Plant of the Month, January 2022

Cypripediums- by Gordon Finch

A few years ago, Jacques Amand gave a talk to the AGS Ulster group; at his stand were cypripediums from a Chelsea show garden, they didn't have any names attached and were being sold at a very reasonable price of which I took full advantage.



The first winter I cosseted them in a greenhouse but was later informed that this wasn't necessary, discovering they can reportedly withstand temperatures down to -40c, grow as far north as the Yukon and across to Newfoundland.

The following year they were planted in several different areas in my garden, from shade to sun and from damp to dry areas. The plants which performed best were all in damper areas, be it sun or shade. Plants in drier areas grew poorly and didn't flower. They were all planted in an open airy compost - the adage 'damp but well drained' is appropriate when discussing Cypripedium growing medium.



They grow in many areas around the world, but the majority come from two distinct areas, China and North America, with China boasting twice as many species as America. All are prized and regularly plundered for profit, for example *Cypripedium calceolus* which are native to Britain were almost driven to extinction due to plant hunters and ill-informed gardeners.

The last few stems in Yorkshire were eventually protected by the formation of a Cypripedium committee in 1970, who protected and later bred new seedlings, the first flowering in 2000.

Of the plants purchased, I believe the pink tinged Cypripedium is 'Kentucky Pink Blush' and the white form which is larger and later flowering to be *Cypripedium reginae album*, I hope to have them all properly identified at our talk in January.