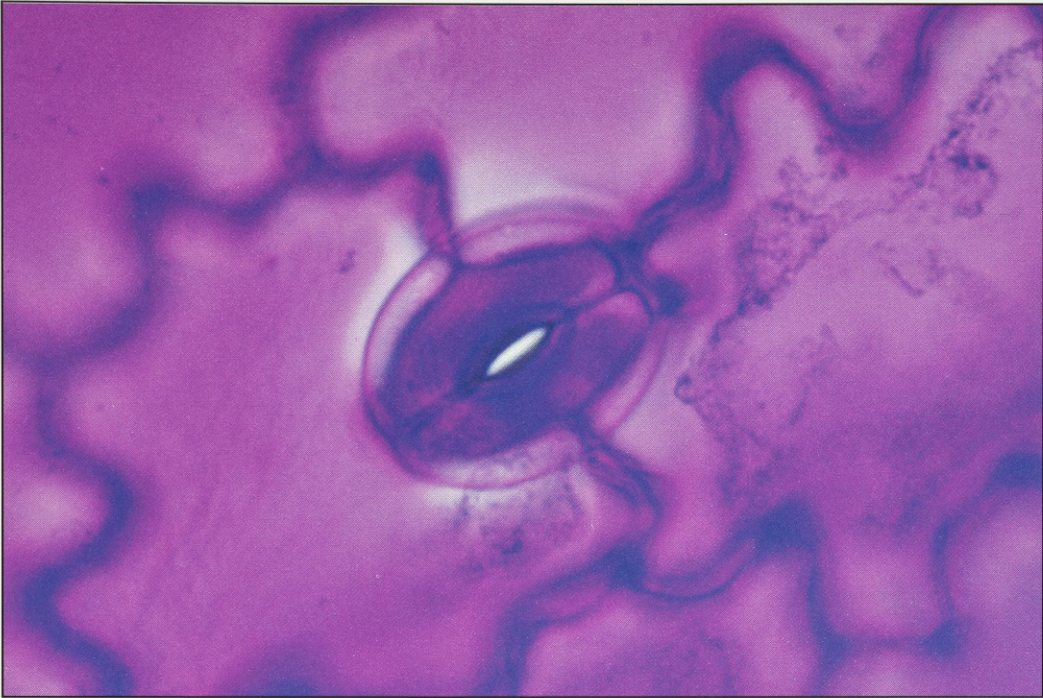
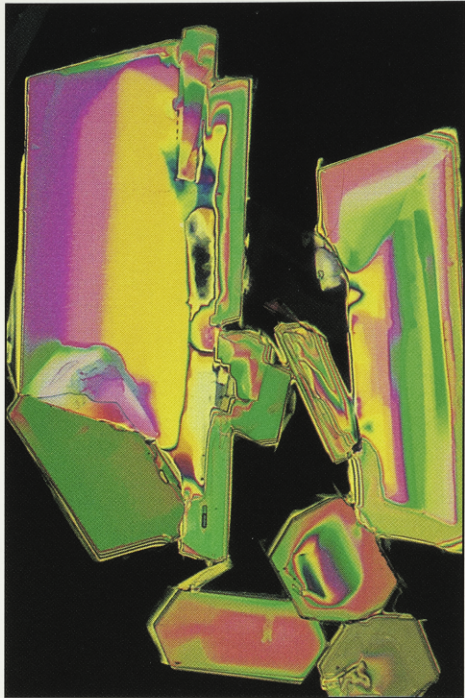


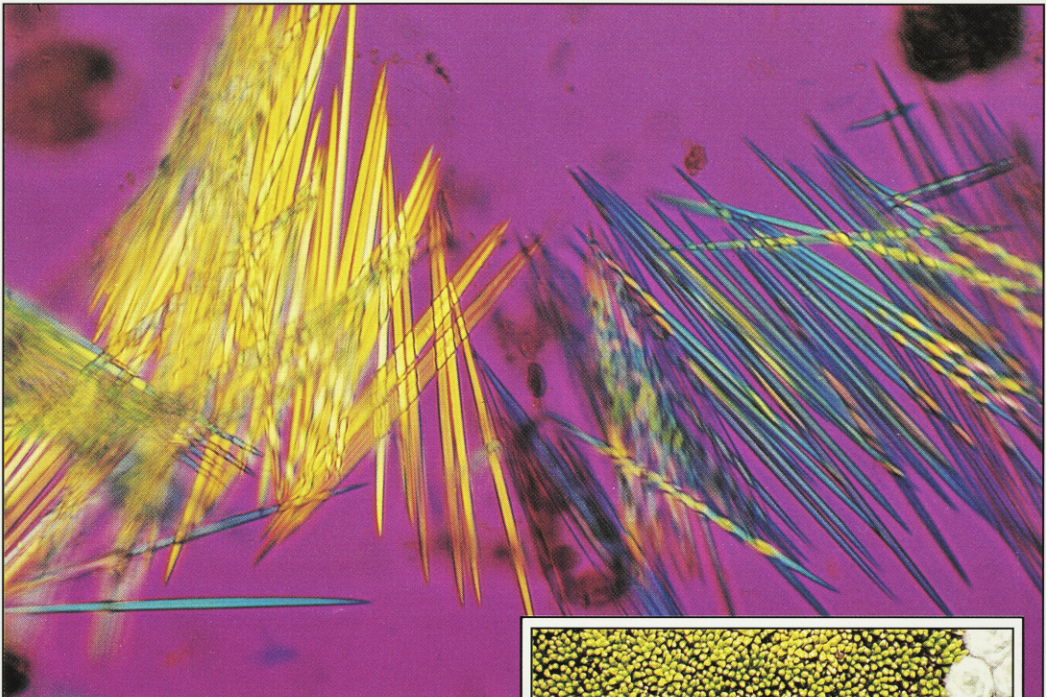
A stomate on the leaf of a root-parasite eyebright, *Euphrasia laingii*.



Crystals of oxalic acid.



Springtime growth in a southern heath, *Leucopogon suavealens*.



Needle-sharp raphide crystals from the leaf of an alpine willowherb, *Epilobium vernicosum*.

A seamless join between a cushion plant, *Phyllachne colensoi*, and a vegetable sheep, *Raoulia eximia*.



mountains, no right or wrong, no justice – alpine creatures survive by whatever means they are able to, and imaginative short-cuts like theft are rewarded quickly and handsomely. That startling reality threatens to spoil our enjoyment of the mountains – how can we marvel at a beautiful alpine meadow if we know that in fact all of its creatures are savagely eating and poisoning each other in a vicious tangle of lethal interactions? No problem. When he first heard

a bellbird, Captain Cook was so delighted that he lyrically called its song “... the most melodious wild music I have ever heard, the most tunable silver sound imaginable”. Two centuries later we science-wise moderns are just as charmed by the bellbird’s delightful carillon of song, even though we know something Cook did not know, that the bellbird sings neither for us nor for its own joy, but to wrest and defend a territory from all comers. Alpine plants do

the same thing although by different means, and our knowing that they do does not diminish their beauty in the slightest. 🐦

*Bill Malcolm was a lecturer in biology in the United States before taking up pottery in Nelson. Nancy is the other half of the potting team, and has developed the special close up photography technique shown on these pages.*