

Primula 'Joe's Gift'

a new primrose cultivar bred by the late Joe Kennedy and introduced by Maeve Bell

(cultivar description by Brendan Sayers, 15 April 2026)



Origin: bred by the late Joe Kennedy of Ballycastle, Co. Antrim circa 2015.

Description: A single, acaulis type, Jack-in-the-green. Flowers bright yellow to 2.5 cm across with a darker centre, pin-flowered, surrounded by bronze, foliaceous calyx segments. Flower stems and sepals edged with fine, white hairs. Foliage bronze-green fading to a dark-green in maturity and in brighter light levels. Calyx segments respond similarly.

Introduced: Joe Kennedy first gave the cultivar as a gift to Maeve Bell at an Irish Garden Plant Society event in autumn 2015. For years Maeve grew this primrose in her Belfast garden and shared divisions with some gardening friends. Following positive and encouraging comments from her fellow gardeners and some primrose specialists, Maeve decided to officially name the plant as a new cultivar with the name, *Primula* 'Joe's Gift'. The cultivar was distributed in small quantities in 2026.



Above and below: Close up of flowers and leafy calyx.





Occasionally the calyx can impede the full expansion of the flowers



Primula 'Joe's Gift' in the garden



For more on Joe Kennedy's primrose breeding see;
Kennedy, J. (2006). Reminiscences of an Irish primrose breeder. *Moorea*, Vol. 15: 47-48.
Sayers, B, & Kennedy, J (2016). Primroses. *Irish Heritage Plants – Plandaí Oidhreachta*: 86-91.