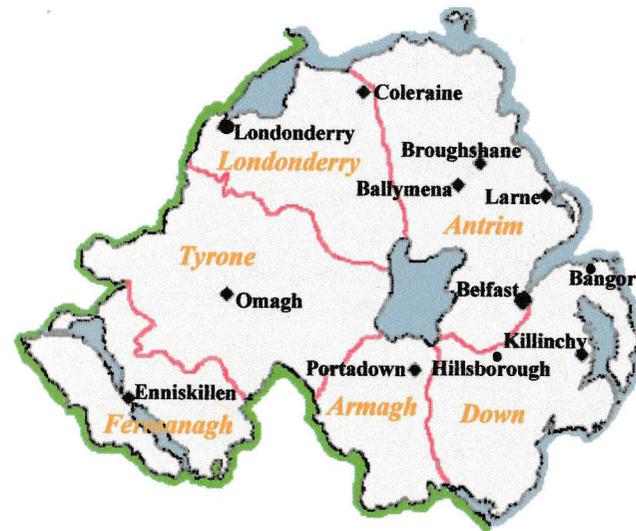


Newsletter

of the

Northern Ireland

Daffodil Group



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**THE NORTHERN IRELAND DAFFODIL GROUP
NEWSLETTER**

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CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Where have the last 12 months gone, it only seems like a couple of weeks ago that George Wilson retired to the good life and I had the privilege of becoming your Chairman. I did not get the opportunity at our last AGM to thank George for his sterling work during his time of office as he was again swanning off on holiday.

It is the Chairman's privilege to be able to thank people around him. It is difficult to thank everyone personally; firstly I would like to mention a couple, while others will be mentioned later in these remarks. First I would like to thank James for his hard work as our secretary, James who has had a very difficult year not only losing his Father a few weeks ago but also having to contend with a broken ankle. James on behalf of the NIDG I would offer our sincere condolences to you, your Mother and all the family circle. Dr Derrick Turbitt, to give him his proper title, has had two posts this year, as our Treasurer and Vice-Chairman, Derrick has done a grand job as our Treasurer and you will hear about some others he has led, later, but in the mean time thank you Derrick for your hard work.

Again we have had a full programme through 2003. It is good that we have many members extremely capable of hosting and lecturing at a NIDG meeting. We are blessed with several members who like to take photographs, among those, Derrick Turbitt and Roly Gilpin who both showed these to the group. Another meeting I enjoyed was Brian Duncan's cultivation of Miniature Daffodils, how Brian remembers those names, I do not remember him referring to notes once. Although I was unable to accompany members on the visit to Guy Wilson gardens at the University of Ulster reports back confirmed an enjoyable day was had by all and our thanks go to Derrick Turbitt for his guided tour.

The Lecture of the Year was of special interest to daffodil seedling growers as we welcomed Sally Kington here to Northern Ireland. We learned all about Daffodil Registration and my only wish is I had some to register.

Your committee has been working hard on this year's programme and among the goodies will be a daffodil Seedling slide Show where George Wilson will have spent the show season gathering material for this, please give him and his helpers plenty to photograph. There will be a Tour of Botanic Gardens with Reg Maxwell; our Lecture of the year will be with Janis Ruksans from Latvia and a visit to Snowdrop gardens next month (February).

Belfast remains at the pinnacle of our Spring Show season. For 2003 it was decided to send the Amateur Championship of Ireland back around our affiliated Spring Shows. In my opinion this was successful, as in the Open and Amateur Championship of Ireland we had 14 entries in the 2 classes. I for one, do not remember as many in one year, but then again I am a young grower and stand to be corrected. The Belfast Spring Show will be held once again at Malone House where we hope to welcome the RHS Narcissus and Tulip Committee. This is only the second time this committee has met outside London and the first time this committee has met outside the mainland. At this point I would like to thank Belfast Parks not only for their continued support of our group but also for agreeing to all our proposals for welcoming the RHS committee to Belfast. Also at this Show there will be an opportunity to present Daffodils to the committee for consideration for "Award of Merit", we have several growers in Ireland capable of presenting suitable blooms to this committee, so let us try and have a good bench full.

As I said we are welcoming the RHS Committee to Belfast and we have started organising a programme of

events for this, among which, there will be a dinner on the Saturday night hosted by Belfast Parks. So I would ask you not only for support but help. A footnote to Belfast Show, the committee has refined the Novice Schedule to encourage easy entry to this section. I would ask all NIDG members, especially exhibitors, to encourage in what ever way possible, any exhibitors they meet at local Spring Shows this year to come along and enter what ever they can in the Belfast Spring Show, there is always plenty of schedules, so all we need is an address. I would also like to thank Sandra Wilson and Nial Watson for once again erecting a brilliant NIDG display stand and of course Alice Blennerhassett of Belfast Parks. Our thanks also to Jill McIvor and the staff of Balance House who provide us with such an excellent venue and hospitality for our meetings throughout the year. I apologise, if I have failed to mention anyone that I should have done.

As we move from one Daffodil season to a next there is always Daffodil friends that we lose and this past year it seems to have been sadder than most. We have lost too many friends to mention here, but I hope in some small way by inserting their obituaries in our last Newsletter, we have shown, how much it has been privilege to have known them.

In most reports of this nature the weather is mentioned somewhere and I am no exception. 2003 was a very mild year with, if I dare say it, possibly the right amount of rainfall. The fine weather through our showing season led to good examples of many varieties of daffodil blooms, when they were needed and local shows well supported. This fine weather continued throughout the digging and planting parts of the season, which was good, as I did not finished planting until well into October. At present I have buds well developed on many varieties.

I am proud to be Chairman of a group that can boast a publication on the scale that which we have in our

Newsletter. I will not dwell on the subject as we have Editorial comments later but would congratulate our Editorial Committee on their hard work that lead to a first-rate publication.

It was good to see so many members at the AGM. I would ask you to support your committee, we have around 70 members but only a small percentage of that we could call active members, in some case committee members are holding two offices, so please do not be shy of coming forward.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to the faithful members who support our meetings. May we try this year to encourage new members either through encouraging novice exhibitors at local shows to show at Belfast thus becoming potential members of the group interested in learning more about our favourite flowers or joining with us to enjoy our social calendar which is varied and informative for both novice and expert alike.

Finally thank you all for your support and help and I wish everyone a successful Daffodil year.

Richard McCaw

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Belfast Show in 2003 was a great success. The total number of exhibits at the show was 734, an increase of 54 exhibits from last year. The highest increase was in the Open Classes of the daffodil section which saw exhibits rise to 568 in comparison to 509 exhibits in the same classes last year, whilst exhibits fell by over 50% in both the amateur and novice sections. The fall in amateur exhibits was due to the Amateur Championship of Ireland moving out of the Belfast

Show. This gave more competition in Open Championship of Ireland this year with 7 entries competing. The novice classes need an injection of new blood. If it was not for Tracey Hamilton there would have been very few novice entries. Tracey needs more competition before facing the Amateurs.

We have one new class at Belfast this year to create competition for the Gilt Medal kindly presented by the Daffodil Society. The class is for 1 vase, 3 blooms, any number of varieties or divisions, unregistered seedlings, not necessarily raised by exhibitor. Raisers name is to be stated.

The 2004 Belfast show will be remembered for years to come. It is only the second time in many decades that the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee will hold a meeting outside of London. So far 13 members of the committee have agreed to come to the event. Let us give it our full backing providing overnight accommodation or transport where necessary. Belfast Council has been most generous with sponsorship of the event and will be hosting a Show Dinner in Belfast Castle for approx. 50 members including NIDG members.

The City of Derry Horticultural society is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, and so as a mark of tribute, the Amateur Championship of Ireland will be held at their Spring Show. Let's give it our backing and make it a show to be remembered. Omagh Horticultural Society will this year be hosting the Silver Thread Award.

The programme for last year (2003) was varied and stimulating, among the most popular was Sally Kington's detailed and interesting lecture on Daffodil Registration. Derek Turbitt brought us all up to speed by viewing daffodils from around the world on his laptop computer. Rowland Gilpin brought us through the show season and Brian Duncan brought us species from Europe. Thank you to all the members who took part in the meetings and thank you

Also for making my life run smoothly.

In this year's very full programme of events we will be experiencing Snowdrops with the help of Mark Smyth from the Alpine Society and the lecture of the year will be in October by Janis Ruksans from Latvia. I trust you will find these events interesting and we look forward to larger than normal attendance at our meetings. Since I have started attending the NIDG I have found attendance levels drop by 50%. This trend can not be allowed to continue. I send out 70 letters to members for each meeting and normally only have 15-20 members at a good meeting. This trend also affects our Editorial Committee's ability to secure articles for the magazine. Last year they could not get enough articles to produce a magazine until the autumn. Make their job more enjoyable by sending them articles and don't rely on a few to do it all.

Finally may I wish everyone a very successful and enjoyable daffodil season this year.

James Smyth

EDITORS COMMENTS

As you all will no doubt have been aware we only had one edition of our newsletter due to the fact that enough material was not available until late in the year when we produced a jumbo edition after many appeals and much soul searching. Copy has started to flow once more and hopefully will continue to do so when members are requested to put forward their ideas on particular aspects or topics. It is essential that we build up a bank of material as it makes my life of producing the newsletter much less stressful.

This edition includes several articles and ideas which hopefully can be continued with others giving their point of

view or relating their experiences so that we may all benefit.

There are two articles on cultivation which show different approaches both in the manner of presentation, conditions and approach to the growing of daffodils yet both authors are striving to compete on the show scene. Another article deals with daffodils that may be sourced from garden centres. Also included is an article on yellow trumpets and another interesting one on how we transmit yellow fever to others of our species. I would draw your attention to the RHS Award of Merit notes and the article on registration which is very informative yet provides much food for thought to an amateur breeder such as myself who has not as yet tried to register any cultivar names. This is one article any amateur breeder should file away for future reference.

In conclusion I would again reiterate the fact that we need to keep copy building up so that we will not have another hiatus in future production of the Newsletter.

Maurice Kerr

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Naming selections from species

I write on behalf of the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee enclosing a paper that was drafted in collaboration with the Advisory Panel on Narcissus Classification to meet concerns about naming selections from *Narcissus* species. Brian Duncan, chairman of committee and panel, hopes that it will be of interest to those wishing to name selections either from

wild populations of *Narcissus* or from those raised from seed in the garden. He hopes that through daffodil journals and periodicals the world over the paper will be given as wide a circulation as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Sally Kington
Secretary, Daffodil and Tulip Committee

NAMING SELECTIONS FROM SPECIES

Giving cultivar names to selections from species has been common practice ever since the early days of plant introduction.

There are many views on the subject, ranging between two extremes:

- that cultivar names should never be applied to selections from species
- that any variant of a species may be given a cultivar name

About two years ago the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee (D&TC) and Advisory Panel on *Narcissus* Classification (APNC) discussed this subject, concerned that some selections from *Narcissus* species that were given cultivar names were not really distinct - or more precisely, did not fully comply with the definition of a cultivar according to the International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (1995):

"A cultivar ² is a taxon that has been selected for a particular attribute or combination of attributes, and that is clearly distinct, uniform and stable in its characteristics and that, when propagated by appropriate means, retains those

characteristics." or perhaps in less cumbersome language - from the appendix of the same International Code:

"A cultivar is a group of individual plants which collectively is distinct from any other, which is uniform in its overall appearance and which remains stable in its attributes."

The Daffodil and Tulip Committee, wishing to clarify matters with regard to *Narcissus*, collaborated with the Advisory Panel to frame some advice which would be fully in compliance with the International Code.

Though neither the RHS (as the International Registration Authority for the genus *Narcissus*) nor the Advisory Panel have the responsibility to judge the distinctness of cultivars (that must be the registrant's decision), the following advice notes are offered. It is hoped that they will be of help to those who may wish to name selections either from wild populations of *Narcissus* or from those raised from seed in the garden.

1. If a selection from a *Narcissus* species is to be named, it should be given a cultivar name and that cultivar name should be registered

Though infraspecific botanical epithets are acceptable, provided they are properly formed and are published according to the Botanical Code (i.e. supported by Latin descriptions and type specimens), it is the opinion of the RHS Daffodil and Tulip Committee and Advisory Panel on *Narcissus* Classification that a proliferation of further botanical names is to be discouraged.

2. Any selection from a *Narcissus* species which is to be given a cultivar name should be "clearly distinct, uniform and stable in its characteristics"

The value of distinctness is an individual assessment by the registrant. Neither the RHS nor the Advisory Panel on *Narcissus* Classification can dictate

3. Any selection from a *Narcissus* species which is to be given a cultivar name should normally be vegetatively propagated.

These notes are not intended to encourage the widespread naming of selections from *Narcissus* species, indeed a proliferation of named selections is not considered desirable.³ Registrants should be convinced that their selections are really worth naming; there is no point in going through the process of naming and registering⁴ selections if they are not distinct.

Brian Duncan
Chairman, Daffodil and Tulip Committee 2004

1) International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants - 1995. Adopted by the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants. Available from RHS Enterprises (tel. 01252 391415)

2) The vast majority of daffodil cultivars are vegetatively propagated clones

3) It is equally important to observe these notes when naming daffodil hybrids and Groups

4) Selections from *Narcissus* species which are given a cultivar name should be classified in Divisions 1- 12 according to the outward characteristics of the flower head(s)

WHY DAFFODILS?

When someone has spent most of his life in Africa and has a Master of Science degree in Tropical Animal Production and Health it seems entirely logical to say 'Why daffodils?'. As a young man, in Africa, I would have a glass of 'Chardonnay' for my 'Sundowner' whilst watching 'Eland' and 'Duiker' to the sound of 'Francolin' and admiring the 'African Sunset' over 'Naivasha'. My last thoughts would have been on daffodils of the same names, in fact apart from in Morocco there are very few daffodils or daffodil enthusiasts in Africa.

So, why daffodils? Hilary and I left Africa in 1988 and much to the dismay of our many African friends decided to settle in Northern Ireland. Shortly afterwards I was at a dinner party and met a wonderful man, Frank Harrison, who was growing and breeding new cultivars of daffodils. I quickly said how much I liked daffodils and in order to impress I added that I was particularly fond of narcissus. Big mistake, I was put right in gentle but firm tones. Following that Hilary and I were invited to lunch with Frank and Patricia and they showed us their field of daffodils. The first little bug of Yellow Fever had got into my bloodstream! Sensing this Frank persuaded me to buy a beginner's collection of bulbs and coached me how to grow them to show standard. The following spring he persuaded me to go to the Northern Ireland Daffodil Group's early show, where Maurice Kerr showed me how to stage my first blooms. He realised that I was in the early stages of Yellow Fever and needed a little more inoculation with the bug to keep up the challenge and so avoid any chance of remission! He quietly advised me how to stage my flowers to their best advantage and to my utter surprise out of my four blooms in the beginner's class I had a first, second and third. At the time I didn't realise that this was just part of the plot to ensure total daffodil addiction.

At home I was so excited that I dashed out and began

my first attempts at hybridization, convinced that every cross would be a winner, (None were). That winter I looked more closely at daffodil varieties and divisions and realised that most of the crosses I had made were with infertile parents! I now called on the rudimentary genetics that I had learnt at university and dug a little deeper into the genetic make up of the various type of daffodils that I had in my limited stock. From then on I bought bulbs of varieties that I felt would be good parents, although I was still making mistakes in my crosses.

Whilst this was going on I was helping Frank with Ballydorn Bulb Farm and learning the whole business from him. He was an excellent teacher and very patient. By this time I was showing regularly and winning occasionally and it was time to move on. The RHS show in London beckoned, and with Richard McCaw already in the novice section I was up against it. We did all right for Northern Ireland although Richard had the lion's share of the glory.

In 1998 during the World Tour to Northern Ireland I became acquainted with the wider daffodil community from around the world. By this time one or two crosses were flowering and a few were showing some promise. The following year Frank decided that the time had come for us to travel to an American daffodil Society (ADS) Convention. Hilary and I were at first reluctant as we did not feel we were ready for the world stage but Frank was far too clever for us. He said that we would be doing him a great favour by taking Ballydorn flowers and setting up a trade stand. We had a wonderful time and made a lot of new friends, I have been to every ADS convention since. It was at Pittsburgh in 1999 that Brian Duncan first suggested that we might take on his daffodil empire. Four years later we gave in and his bulbs joined Ballydorn under the umbrella of Ringhaddy Daffodils, the rest is history.

In the winter as the rain beats down and I stand in the mud amongst the bulbs, I wonder, why daffodils? Then spring arrives, the flowers come out, the show season begins and then I know why!

GARDEN CENTRE DAFFODILS

As a part time worker in a garden centre I was curious to see what daffodil varieties are on offer in the brightly coloured packs. The nature of bulbous plants means that they are much slower to multiply than plants that can be propagated by cuttings etc. Consequently those available on the much larger scale required by multiple outlets are older varieties.

A study of the wholesale catalogues reveals not much of interest in division 1; 'King Alfred' 1Y-Y, 'Golden Harvest' 1Y-Y and 'Spellbinder' 1Y-W being the best on offer. Division 2 has more of interest; 2Y-Y's include 'Saint Keverne' and 'Camelot'. I would be tempted to grow the latter and cross it with some of the modern 2Y-R's in the hope of producing a 2Y-R 'Altun Ha' look alike. The reverse bicolour 'Binkie' is of interest as it is a parent of the famous 'Daydream'. The older pinks are now becoming available including 'Passionale' 2W-P, 'Rainbow' 2W-WWP and 'Salome' 2W-P; all capable of winning prizes on their day. Surprisingly no worthwhile 2Y-R's are included. Division 3 daffodils include 'Altruist' a useful 3O-R and the miniature 'Segovia' 3W-Y which is still winning prizes.

'Acropolis' 4W-R and 'Tahiti' 4Y-R are the pick of the division 4's. 'Tahiti' is proving to be a good parent and I have some interesting seedlings from it. Division 5's are scarce anywhere and 'Thalia' 5W-W and 'Hawera' 5Y-Y can win in this division. Division 6 is best represented by 'Jetfire' 6Y-R and 'Itzim' 6Y-R which leads me to think that the breeders have produced very few 6Y-R's in recent years. 'Sweetness' 7Y-Y and 'Sun disc' 7Y-Y can hold their own in div 7 classes while 'Bell song' 7W-P introduces some novelty in this division. Finally division 11 flowers (did I hear George cheering) can be found masquerading as butterfly or orchid daffodils; 'Cassata' 11W-Y and 'Chanterelle' 11Y-Y being

the best on offer.

A closer examination showed that the bulbs supplied are reasonably clean and more importantly sound and to the eye free of disease. All in all the brightly coloured packs provide an inexpensive introduction to daffodil growing and with careful selection many are capable of winning prizes at local shows. Of course we all know what that can lead to :---

Derek Turbitt

SIR FRANK HARRISON'S DAFFODILS

In 1946 Frank Harrison and his wife Patricia started the Ballydorn Bulb Farm to produce blooms for the cut flower market. His interest developed towards daffodils. This led him to investigate ways of prolonging the flowering season and so increase the profitability of his cut flower business. He also felt that a wider range of colours would make daffodils more interesting to the general public. Seeking advice from the hybridisers of the day he made his first crosses. His aim was to produce flowers of strong and unusual colours but never forgetting that the daffodil was a garden plant and so should be robust. His bulb field faced North East and was hit by the full force of the wind so his seedlings had to be able to withstand such conditions.

He knew that any major colour breakthrough would probably come from a mutation and as he had contacts in the British Atomic Energy Authority he arranged to have thousands of seeds irradiated. Various amounts of radiation was used on different batches and although he would never say that it had had any effect it was a seedling from one of the irradiated seeds that gave him his first 2O-R, 'Rio Rouge', from which the rest of his Rio family of O-Rs are descended. (Sadly I have not seen his notes for this experiment).

In order to extend the season later into the year he started using poeticus hybrids and soon developed a liking of this division for which he has become known. He loved a green eye and started to concentrate on selecting flowers that showed green in the corona. To him green had to be a deep green not an pallid off-white. He named many very green poeticus blooms including 'Greenpark' 9W-GGO, 'Green Lodge' 9W-GGO and 'Hillhead' 9W-GGR. Spin offs from this programme were 'Red Hugh' 9W-GRR, 'Fairy Footsteps' two being "all white division 9s" but registered as division 3, and some other very green division threes. He never achieved his aim of an all green corona on a flower that was good enough to show. His only true green he nicknamed 'Green Tragedy' and it was so awful that he only showed it as a joke. However, he did raise a seedling that regularly has an all green corona and is a very pleasant flower but is not consistent, in that more often than not it has a thin red rim.

His other colour love was a range of buff or sandy coloured division twos. These were bred from a flower of his own raising, 'Golden Amber' 2Y-OOY. The best being 'Golden Strand' 2Y-O and 'Sandymount' 2Y-O. Although registered as Y-O they have a pale sandy coloured perianth which is most attractive and add contrast to collections.

His rigid criteria and the relatively few crosses he made each season meant that over 55 years of hybridising he only registered 200 seedlings although there are also 3 unregistered seedlings in the Royal Horticultural Society's database. All of these are very robust plants with strong stems and necks. He would pick one of his flowers and shake it vigorously to demonstrate what he meant by a strong stem and neck.

He leaves behind him the challenge to create a green corona which has been taken up by hybridisers throughout the world. One day his dream will be realised.

Nial Watson,

THE GOLDEN TRUMPETS

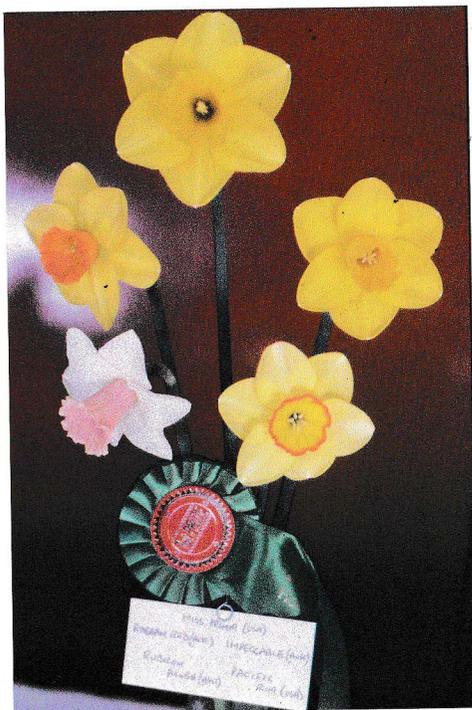
In considering how to approach the preparation of these notes several questions have come to mind.

- How good is the current standard in yellow trumpet daffodils?
- What are our future aims in yellow trumpet breeding?
- Have these aims changed over the years?
- Do we need a change of direction in breeding yellow trumpets?
- What qualities are missing in yellow trumpets?

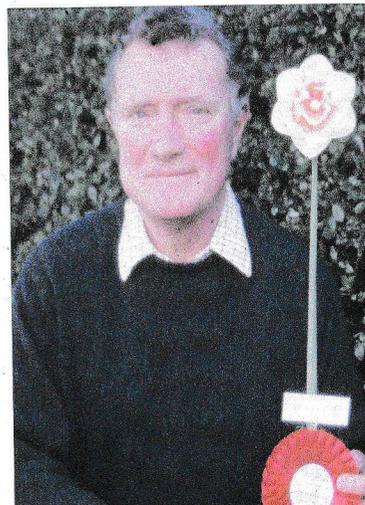
These are important questions and I do not pretend to be qualified to answer all of them. My interests have been primarily towards the breeding of large flowers of good exhibition form combined with good plant habit with sufficient vigour and disease resistance to make them equally good garden plants. The qualities required primarily for the mass bulb trade and the cut flower industry have not received much consideration in making crosses, though by chance, some of these qualities turn up in seedlings and are seized upon by Dutch visitors.

Going back to the earlier questions posed I think the current quality of Yellow trumpets for exhibition is quite good and there are numerous cultivars from which to choose. Breeding work has been continuous for over a century ('King Alfred' was bred in the 1880's) and a lot of progress has been made in that time.. The deepest maximum golden colour of *N. hispanicus* has been achieved long ago in exhibition quality flowers, perhaps best known to us in 'Goldcourt' 'Arctic Gold' and more recently in 'Midas Touch'. However, this maximum gene seems to be allied to smaller size and a slight twist (not necessarily unattractive)

2003 Shows



Brian Duncan's winning entry in the class for 5 Foreign Raised at Hillsborough



Nial Watson with a fine example of Dorchester



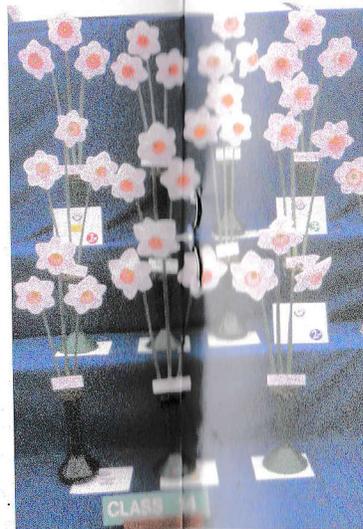
Alice Watson shows that her father is not the only one who can win a red ribbon



Richard McCaw's Amateur Championship twelve at Hillsborough



Single stem entries at Belfast including the Seedling class raised by exhibitor



Some of the entries in the 2W-P collection class at Belfast



Robert Curry admires one of his many fine blooms at Coleraine.

and when we try to breed for larger size and flatter form we tend to lose a little of the intensity of colour. Also, there is still room for improvement in the disease resistance of yellow trumpets many are still susceptible to basal rot and/or yellow stripe.

When I started growing exhibition daffodils '**Kingscourt**' was the leading yellow trumpet - a lovely smooth flower, mid - yellow in colour and with a delightful lilt to the inner petals. Where is it now and why has it disappeared? Alas, it was so prone to Yellow stripe and had to be rogued so rigorously each year that it was eventually dropped from catalogues. Also, it is a sad fact that this susceptibility to stripe seems to be inherited in many of its progeny. '**Golden Harvest**' - a favourite of the cut flower industry has a dreadful record for basal rot. So future breeding needs to be cognizant of these problems as well as size, form and colour though in Northern Ireland we do not suffer the symptoms of basal rot like those in warmer climes.

Willie Dunlop once told me that the 1 Y-Y's were the most difficult to breed because often a very promising first selection never repeated its early promise. Having made and discarded numerous selections over the years I think I can vouch for the veracity of his statement.

Many years ago I wrote that one of my aims was to breed a yellow trumpet of the size and style of the white '**Empress of Ireland**' combined with the polished smooth texture and depth of colour of '**Arctic Gold**'. This is still an aim, we have lost that wonderful flaring trumpet in our efforts to obtain flowers which do not nick petals on opening. With '**Verdant**' and its child '**Chobe River**' I just about achieved the form but the colour was diluted by the white of the 'Empress'. I have made many crosses using '**Chobe River**' and plan to make many more using the best of the deep golden varieties available. Alas, for some reason I have not had very good germination of seeds from these

crosses, probably as a result of careless cultural practices rather than for any genetic reason.

So, with these preliminary and long winded thoughts, I'd better answer; get back to my brief and give some view of what I think are the best yellow trumpets available at the present time.

I think the largest and best IY-Y specimen I have ever seen was a magnificent and stylish '**Disquiet**' exhibited by Colin Gilman at the Daffodil Society Show at Solihull in 2001. Incredible to me, and I think everyone else, except the judges, it was placed second in its class, beaten by an undistinguished '**Ombersley**' which was then given the Best Div. 1 award. '**Disquiet**' raised by David Jackson in Tasmania has been around for almost 10 years but is only now being properly tested by U.K. growers. It has joined my stable of studs and I hope it has the constitution for a harsher climate that of its homeland.

The aforementioned '**Ombersley**' is winning many prizes at the highest levels and is undoubtedly one to grow. It has the necessary show qualities but to my eye lacks a certain style and grace - it is a good big bruiser for the back row!

Of my own breeding perhaps the most consistent prize-winner is '**Goldfinger**'. It has many merits ...and a few faults. The trumpet is a bit too straight for my taste but its greatest fault is perhaps that the major petals tend to be rather incurved at the edges, which makes grooming hazardous if not an impossible occupation. You have to show it as it grows! It is, however remarkably consistent and exceptionally durable being just about the longest lasting flower I have grown - witness that it is often a prize-winner at early and late shows.

Some friends favour '**Ethos**' which is a bit larger and the petals are flat and smooth without any incurving edges. It is consistent and also has a good show bench record.

One of my personal favourites for elegance and style as well as consistency is 'Mulroy Bay' though I have to admit that it is more of a front or middle row bloom in group classes.

Late flowering yellow trumpets are scarce and I think the best I've grown is Patrick Kiernan's 'Inny River'. It is very smooth, deep golden yellow in colour, very consistent and flowers when the others of its kind are fading. It was Best Div 1 at the Late London Show in 2003.

Another late flower which has displayed some magnificent blooms in London is Noel Burr's 'Sharnden' from the unlikely cross 'Camelot' x 'Golden Aura'! But perhaps we should not be surprised by any offspring of 'Camelot', the parentage of which is just as questionable as that of 'Golden Aura'.

But favourite of all is 'Chobe River' when it is at its best. It approaches 'Empress of Ireland' in form and size and has several Best bloom awards to its credit. Despite its lack of real depth of colour perhaps I like it best because I still think it has the potential to breed that wonderfully smooth deep golden trumpet which has been in my mind's eye for so long. That little golden N.cyclamineus gene in its background must come out sometime!

Brian Duncan

MY DAFFODIL YEAR

As you will see from the following diary I am not a very 'green' daffodil grower. My use of chemicals stems from the intensity of cultivation in my rigs and the lack so far of the opportunity to leave rigs fallow for the recommended two years. This is not a justification of my agricultural dependence on chemicals just a pragmatic reason for using them. I grow my daffodils in an allotment and as a concession to my vegetable growing neighbour I

keep a three metre gap between the end of my nearest rig and his closest planting, most of the chemicals I use are also soil neutralised or not persistent in duration.

January:-

Weekly check for damage by visiting dogs, vandalism etc. and checking for emerging noses.

February:-

As above with first spraying of fungicide (whatever is to hand) as the area appears prone to Botrytis. When foliage is universally apparent across the rigs I give a cocktail of general fertiliser plus Temik to feed the bulbs and any undesirables lurking in the soil.

March and April:-

Usual pantomime and panic associated with showing plus keeping the rigs nominally weed free by hoeing and hand weeding. Continued spraying with a selection of fungicides in rota and dead heading as required. I do very little hybridising so I avoid much of the hassle associated with this activity.

May:-

Allow weed cover to flourish on rigs where I am using this cover as a means of fly control but control weed propagation by dead heading the weeds by hand or with a strimmer. Continue spraying with fungicides in rota.

June:-

Bulb lifting. I have used various systems and processes on this task, currently my lifting starts with washing and root removal immediately after lifting. This is followed by a dip in a solution of Armillatox coupled with one of the fungicides that I use. My bulb storage leaves a lot to be desired, I currently use stacking baskets but I feel this does not allow enough air space for good circulation. In order to assist this I use a greenhouse heater/blower on the cold setting to waft

air through the boxes. After lifting I fork over the emptied rigs, this helps to remove any 'strays' and makes the soil more friable. Following this (if I remember) I use a solution of Jeyes fluid at around 2.5 litres/square metre a first stage in soil sterilisation.

July:-

Constant checking of bulbs in store for signs of 'nasties'. Foliage removal and weed cover removal from unlifted rigs followed by hoeing and use of Armillatox to prevent moss invasion and aid soil cleanliness. Re-digging of empty rigs and incorporation of Basamid followed by covering with black polythene. This covering will stay in place for a r o u n d f o u r w e e k s .

August:-

Start sorting bulbs into those I am going to keep and those I am passing on to friends, rivals' or selecting for the bulb auction or sales table. Bulbs for keeping are recleaned bagged and labelled. Towards the end of the month I remove the polythene from the Basimid treated rigs and fork them over to release unvented gas.

The annual boiler overhaul/modification also takes place around this time with recalibration of temperature indicators etc. There is also the usual search for the recipe for the actual hot water treatment. This recipe varies year on year as various pesticides or fungicides are withdrawn or repackaged in huge commercial quantities putting their purchase out of the amateurs reach.

If everything goes according to plan the bulbs, including those I am giving away receive HWT in the last week of August, often however September is a more realistic aim. After HWT I keep the bulbs in their bags and hang them on a drying line with air circulated by the trusty greenhouse blower.

September:-

Checking of incoming new stock from growers for accuracy of orders and condition of bulbs. Around this time when I know what I have to plant I make out planting lists for rigs. I try to plant in a fairly logical colour/division sequence but I also tend to put foreign raised or American varieties in groups regardless of division or colour. My memory and variety identification is not up to remembering country of origin unless I do it this way. Once I get all this sorted I write new labels as required and start planting. I plant using a trowel and each bulb is planted in a pocket of Temik rich soil. I don't know if all this Basamid and Temik is necessary or indeed effective but some years ago I imported eelworm from some source and I have been taking every precaution since then to avoid a recurrence of this dreadful pest. So far it seems to be working.

October:-

Final planting (hopefully) including bulbs bought at our auction which I try to quarantine in a separate rig, this is not always possible and I try to remember to keep an eye on them. As someone once said "Society auctions are a great idea they even share out pests and diseases"! Early in the month I treat the unlifted rigs with Temik and sulphate of potash. The timing of this is supposed to coincide with maximum root production and ground based nutrient up take. Obviously the type of season affects this but in general I rarely get around to doing this until the first week in October. After this and depending on availability I mulch all the rigs with a soil improver supplied by a local garden centre. The soil in my allotment is quite sandy and requires fibrous organic bulk to aid moisture retention and this stuff appears to help in this regard. It is basically spent mushroom compost which has been left outside to

leach out excess lime and it is then composted with chicken manure. How accurate this tale is I don't know but it does seem to improve the soil.

November:-

The mulch unfortunately introduces viable weed seeds and when these germinate I treat them with glyphosate. I also treat the paths between the rigs at this stage. I have problems with clover in the allotment and I treat this at this stage with one of the clover specific herbicides. This is also the time for improving/repairing fences and windbreaks, a constant process as my plot is quite exposed. Last of all I give the rigs one last soak with Armillatox to slowdown moss and hopefully kill a few more alien spores.

December:-

Joy of joys, an idle month where I get reacquainted with family and friends. I also attempt to catch up with clerical work such as accurate planting maps etc.

George Wilson

YELLOW FEVER— A GREEN APPROACH

An ever changing approach to conditions.

Situated here on the Seven Mile Straight at about 500 feet above sea level where weather conditions are influenced greatly by being just over the rim which forms the edge of the Antrim plateau above Belfast. There is a tendency to get cold blustery winds and more rain than areas close by due to the fact that as the winds rise they tend to deposit their moisture. Shelter in the garden has been developed over the years by the planting of hedges and trees to counteract the effects of the stronger winds usually experienced early in the year. Trees and hedges filter and slow down wind for up to six times their height whereas fencing panels tend to cause the wind to swirl after it goes over the top. The garden

extends to approximately 1.5 acres made up of lawns, vegetable beds and mixed herbaceous beds or borders.

Generally I try to use as few chemicals as possible due to the fact that I grow a lot of vegetables for home consumption and do not like the thought of consuming residue chemicals. The bird population in the garden is encouraged throughout the year particularly by winter feeding as they are invaluable friends when it comes to destroying pests. Herbaceous plants are left throughout the winter which provide good shelter and hibernation areas for allies such as ladybirds. Two water features ensure there is an abundance of frogs throughout the garden.

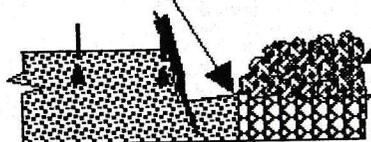
Soil here on the Seven Mile Straight is heavy clay over a red clay subsoil which is very sticky. To facilitate the growing of plants in these conditions I have used liberal quantities of horse manure to increase the depth of top soil available and to improve the structure of the soil which has not been helped since the New Zealand flat worm has all but decimated the ordinary worm population which were so valuable in the early years of the garden to the soil structure. Worms now are practically non existent so cultivation techniques have been adapted to try and compensate so that the soil remains open and does not become waterlogged. The depth of top soil available has increased considerably from just over a spade depth to about 16 inches. Lime is used to keep the ph of the soil between 5.5 and 6.5 as experience has shown that daffodils seem to grow better when the soil is slightly acid. Liming is usually done for areas where I am going to grow vegetables such as brassicas. The daffodils are grown in the areas throughout the garden which I also use to produce vegetables for home consumption. A three year down system is used and approximately one third of the bulbs are lifted every year, bulbs are then not planted back in this soil for a further three seasons.

Bulbs are lifted generally during the second and third weeks in July when the foliage has died back. To aid this the

beds are flame gunned to remove dead and dying foliage. Bulbs are lifted one row at a time using a broad tined potato fork. Each variety is cleaned roughly with the aid of a knife which is used to remove excess soil sticking to them, any loose dead scales and the roots are cut back to reveal the basal plate. Any bulbs which are not in good condition or show possible signs of narcissus fly are discarded before the bulbs are placed in lily baskets and dipped in a ten gallon barrel filled with diluted disinfectant. The soil between the lifted row and the next variety is double dug before the next row is dug out, cleaned and dipped.

Fork pushed down and used to break up second spit and open top layer of sub soil

Top spit turned over and thrown forward

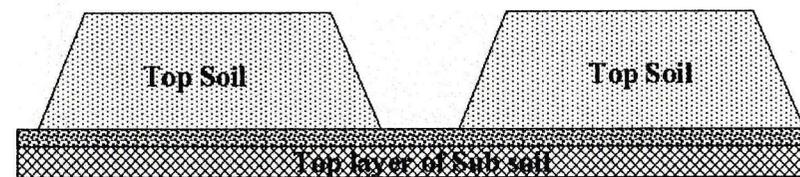


This is somewhat time consuming but has advantages in that it opens the top layer of subsoil and that it allows the soil to drain better and improves the soil structure as the soil has several months to weather throughout autumn and the winter before it is used for vegetables. The soil even after many years still tends to come out in blocks unless it is continually cultivated. Dipped bulbs are then thrown out on grass to dry for a couple of days before being placed underneath a dense cypress hedge which affords a dry area with a good airflow underneath to continue further drying. Bulbs are sorted as to division or seedling numbers at this stage as I prefer to plant named varieties in divisions which makes it easier when it comes to cutting in the flowering season for show. As digging proceeds and initial drying has taken place the bulb varieties are moved closer together and mushroom boxes placed over the top to keep the varieties separate and to provide some extra cover. I find that the bulbs store and ripen well using this technique and

only resort to bringing them under cover when summers are extremely wet and the rain tends to really penetrate the protection afforded by the hedge.

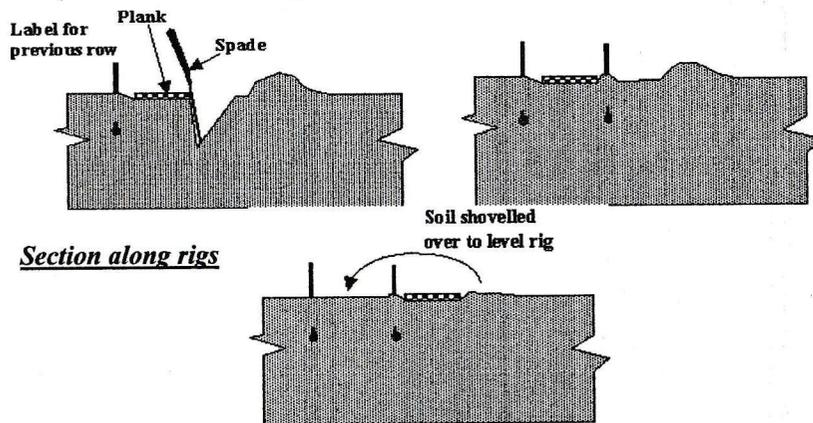
Preparation of ground for planting begins in the late spring. Deep rooted perennial weeds such as docks and buttercups are dug out of the area allocated to bulb planting then the ground is flame gunned to remove annual weeds. When time permits the ground is turned over with a rotovator. This is done periodically throughout the following months as conditions permit to kill off weeds and make the soil friable. Early August a liberal quantity of horse manure is spread on top and then rotovated into the ground. This not only helps to improve the structure of the soil but also feeds the bulbs. Late in August or when time permits the soil is then broken down to a fine crumb like structure using a small high speed mini rotovator. Rigs are then thrown up using a long tailed shovel to give as great a depth as possible which entails shovelling the soil where the path will be between the rigs onto the top of the rig on either side. This has been done in recent years to combat the very wet spells I have been experiencing particularly in the autumn and early winter months.

Rigs tend to be just over 4 foot wide and this year when thrown up they were about 14 inches tall with fairly steep



sides to maximise ground. The rigs are then left until I am ready to plant which I try to do in early September the weather dictating when the actual planting is done. In recent years when the weather has broken the ground becomes very wet and sticky so I try to have the planting done before soil conditions reach this stage.

Planting is done using a spade and a plank which is about 7.5 inches wide and 4 foot long. The plank is used to distribute my weight across a greater area and so compact the soil less. Being slightly less than the width of the rig when placed on top of the rig it does not tend to collapse the edges. The plank is also useful as a gauge to space the rows at about 1 foot apart; the depth of planting and to provide a straight edge for each row across the rig. I find this easier and quicker than a trowel as the planting 'groove' is made by just levering the spade against the plank and throwing the soil forward.



The bulbs are then dropped into the row at about 4 inch spacing. Bulbs planted tend to be further selected as I plant using a mixture of good sized rounds and some mother bulbs with a small offset attached as I find that if I have an attack of narcissus fly it tends to go for mother bulb and not the offset. Due to the amount of ground now being occupied by an ever increasing number of seedlings I tend to plant two or three varieties to a row unless the variety has proved to be very consistent in the past. Labels made from strips of aluminium are inserted with the name or number of the bulb or cross and the soil is then pulled back over the bulbs. The plank is then repositioned and the soil that was compressed by the plank is quickly loosened using a twisting action with the spade before filling up level and commencing to make the next planting

'groove'. This technique is repeated along the entire length of the rigs until all bulbs have been planted. New stock from outside sources are always grown in pots for the first year to check that the bulbs are healthy.

One and two year down stock are flame gunned at the same time as those that are to be lifted and beds are hoed to fill any holes left by dying stems. During July and August these beds are given the occasional hoe to keep germinating weeds under control. After planting has been completed in September the one and two year down rigs are worked with a three pronged cultivator so as to loosen and break up the top layer of soil. During early October all beds are given a final quick run over with the flame gun to kill off any emerging weed seedlings so that the rigs remain fairly clean for the winter months and to reduce the need to walk up and down between the rigs when the soil is wet and tends to destroy it's structure. Two year down rigs then are given a mulch of manure to suppress weeds and keep the beds fairly clean in their final year as the foliage of the multiplied bulbs can be quite dense during the growing season thus making them harder to weed by hand or hoe without damaging foliage. Any bonfire ash from the hedge cuttings and tree and shrub pruning is sprinkled over the rigs while it is still dry so that any potash contained therein helps to feed the bulbs.

During March weather and soil conditions permitting the rigs are either hand weeded or hoed if the weather is suitable. Perennial weeds are pulled by hand. April the control of weeds is a priority as the bulbs and weeds are growing apace and blooms are starting to open. The season tends to be very late here so the main flush is usually towards the second or third week in April of what are normally considered to be mid season varieties. No protection is afforded to blooms other than a windbreak netting on the exposed area of garden to the western side when bulbs are growing in that area.

When considering attending the show at the weekend I am now in the fortunate position that I can cut the blooms which

have just opened early in the morning which I think is the best time. Blooms are labelled by use of a permanent marker and immediately put into bottles of water before being brought in to a protected area which has a roller screen netting side so that the blooms have protection from both the sun and extremes of weather. Very little is done in the way of dressing other than to press back petals or remove obvious dirt before it becomes a permanent mark on the flowers. Where possible and time permits cut blooms are segregated into divisions and or varieties so that final selection for staging is easier when selection is done towards the end of the week for a show.

Rigs are kept weeded either by use of a hoe or hand preferably the former as this keeps the top layer of soil between the rows as a fine tilth and lets air in and would apparently reduce fly damage as the soil tends to fill in as bulb foliage shrinks toward the end of the growing season. An occasional spray may be given after the blooms have faded and while the bulbs are growing strongly if there are signs of fungal diseases. Any signs of foliage with brown tips has the tip removed and disposed of time permitting. If any bulbs show signs of virus they are rogued out and the soil and surrounding foliage is given a good drench of disinfectant. If as sometimes happens after flowering there is a prolonged dry spell before the foliage dies down, the rigs are watered with a sprinkler but this is not very often as my heavy soil holds plenty of moisture. Bulbs are encouraged to grow strongly for as long as possible before the lifting begins again for another year.

This approach seems to work for me and involves the minimal use of chemicals. Several new seedlings are being remarked on by fellow exhibitors over recent seasons when they have been brought out to show. I am gradually approaching the stage where I hope to be able to compete in classes for the first four divisions with blooms of my own raising.

Maurice Kerr

THE GARDENER'S HYMN

To the tune of All things bright and beautiful

All things bright and beautiful	The drought that kills the fuchsias
All creatures great and small	The frost that nips the buds
All things wise and wonderful,	The rain that drowns the seedlings
The Lord God made them all.	The blight that hits the spuds.

But what we never mention	The midges and mosquitoes
Though gardeners know it's true	The nettles and the weeds
Is when he made the goodies	The pigeons in the green stuff
He made the baddies too	The sparrows on the seeds

All things spray and squattable	The fly that gets the carrots
Disasters great and small	The wasp that eats the plums
All things paraquatable,	How black the gardener's outlook
The Lord God made them all	Though green may be his thumbs

The greenfly on the roses	But still we gardeners labour
The maggots in the peas	Midst vegetables and flowers
Manure that fills our noses,	And pray what hits the neighbours
He also gave us these	Will somehow bypass ours.

The fungus on the goose-gogs
 The clubroot on the greens
 The slugs that eat the lettuce
 And chew the aubergines

Sandy McCabe found this while on holiday and thought someone would like to compose another verse or two which could be added

AWARD of MERIT

You may consider staging some of your own daffodils :-
Plants may be considered whether suited for exhibition or garden or both

For a **Certificate of Preliminary Commendation**: not fewer than three stems; either cut or in one or more pots, or pans.

For an **Award of Merit** or for further assessment as a candidate for the **Award of Garden Merit** not fewer than five stems, either cut or in one or more pots or pans.

Notify Richard McCaw of your intentions as soon as possible and he will give you entry forms and further details.

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