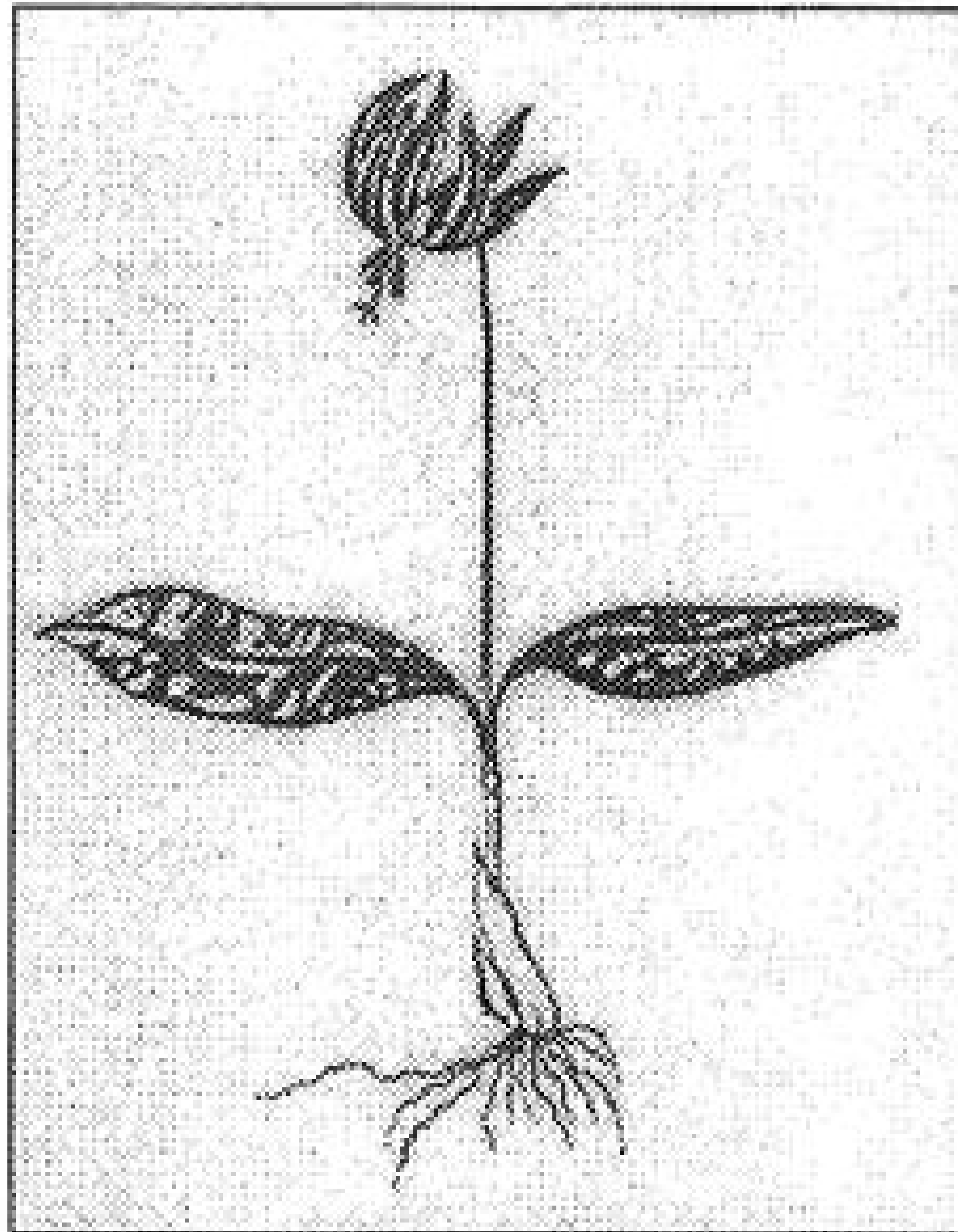


***THE BULB***  
***NEWSLETTER***



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## The Bulb Newsletter No. 17

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The Bulb Newsletter Team: Brian & Margaret Mathew  
90 Foley Road, Claygate, Esher, Surrey KT10 0NB, U.K.

### **Has anyone seen a cross *Puschkiscilla*?**

No, this is not a silly joke I found in a Christmas cracker! Checking one day in the *Index Kewensis* for the epithets that have been published in *Puschkinia*, I noticed that the next alphabetical generic entry was given as *x Puschkiscilla*, fairly obviously a cross between *Puschkinia* and *Scilla*. However, I had not heard of such a cross so I thought it would be worth checking for more information; unfortunately the authors of the name provided little extra data, other than that it is a cross between *Puschkinia scilloides* and *Scilla bifolia*. There are, for example, no clues as to whether it was an intentional cross, where it occurred, what it was like, etc. The hybrid was named *x Puschkiscilla scilloirica* by R.Ciferri & V.Giacomini in *Nomenclator Florae Italicae* Part 1: 112 (1950). This publication is purely a list of names, without descriptions, of the plants occurring in Italy, both wild and cultivated. *Puschkinia* does not occur in Europe so this must have been found in the wild somewhere in western Asia, or it happened in cultivation.

So, if anyone has seen or is growing a *Puschkinia-Scilla* cross we would be interested to hear.

### **And, has anyone seen this *Crocus*?**

Prompted by a request from Erich Pasche for information on *Crocus biflorus* var. *barrii*, I did a bit of searching in the literature with only partial success since the descriptions are not very thorough. Unless there is someone still growing it somewhere, it will be difficult to positively identify it. In *A Handbook of Crocus and Colchicum for Gardeners*, by E.A.Bowles (see BN 16:10) notes that this 'was first noticed by me at a fortnightly show at the Royal Horticultural Society, as an unusually closely feathered form of the white-grounded variety *pusillus* with which it was shown. As I grew it here [presumably at Myddelton House, Enfield] I found it a very remarkable form and the leaves pierce through the ground in tufts and spread out on the surface, looking much like clumps of that

omnipresent weed *Poa annua*. They are, moreover, of a very bright yellow-green like that grass. It flowers later than other forms of *C. biflorus*, except the albino (\*see footnote), and so freely that the flowers actually prevent one another from opening fully. The corm tunic is thinner in texture than that of an ordinary *C. biflorus*, and the membrane is mixed with parallel fibre and splits at the base.'

It thus sounds as if *barrii* was regarded by Bowles as a variant of the Italian *C. biflorus* (i.e. of subsp. *biflorus*). In an effort to find the origin of *barrii* I hunted through the catalogues of Barr & Sons and Barr & Sugden of the 1920s, since this was mentioned by Bowles in his 1924 version of the *Handbook*. The Barr nursery was noted for its bulbs and used to issue a separate *Crocus* list, so numerous were the crocuses offered. In the main catalogue for 1922 there is the advertisement: 'a descriptive list of crocuses is available on application' but this and succeeding lists do not feature *barrii*; the first in which it appears is the 'Crocus Species List' for July-September 1925, and it is listed again in following years but had gone again by 1929. The entry reads: '*C. biflorus Barrii* (3), a lovely little well-marked form, flowers white, striped violet, dwarf, and very free-flowering; a gem for rock garden. 9s. 6d. per dozen, 10d. each.' The (3) presumably refers to the flowering time, in March.

Certainly some of the Italian *C. biflorus* forms I have grown have been small with very narrow leaves and it is easy to see why the epithet *pusillus* (= very small, in all parts) was used. It is very unlikely that anyone still has this in cultivation and in the absence of any information as to where it originated it is impossible to re-collect it in the wild. However, one might be able to select something from the populations of small variants of *C. biflorus* in Italy that fit the details given by Bowles and by Barr. If this is done, it could be treated as a cultivar, 'Barrii' that would be allowable under the Code of Nomenclature since the this latinised epithet was published before 1959. After that date, clonal names should not be form in this way.

\* the 'albino' referred to by Bowles is presumably the pure white variant of *C. biflorus* mentioned by him on page 115 of the *Handbook* (revised edition, 1952): 'I have raised seedlings from it [speaking of the *estriatus* variant of *C. biflorus* var. *argenteus*], and though a large proportion reproduce the variety *estriatus* I obtained about five per cent of the striped later flowering form, and in some batches of seedlings one or two of a beautiful little albino, pure white except for the band of straw colour on the outer segments. If self-fertilised this white form breeds true and is valuable for the rock garden as it flowers latest of all the varieties of *C. biflorus*.' These all appear to be variants of the Italian *C. biflorus*, of which *pusillus*, mentioned by Bowles in connection with *barrii*, is another.

### **Primrose Warburg**

The mention of *Crocus* brings back memories of early spring and autumn visits with the Crocus Group (see BN 16:17) to South Hayes, Oxford, Primrose Warburg's home where she grew many interesting plants, not just crocuses; there were, for example, collections of irises, willows, lilies, snowdrops, hellebores, daffodil cultivars and aroids all set in an attractive hillside garden. Primrose died on the 24th November and will be missed by her many friends. She only recently gave up as Secretary of the Crocus Group for a very well deserved rest, for she had organised it for many years, arranging the Newsletter, outings to visit 'crocussy' gardens and auctions of plants. In the case of auctions she was always one of the most generous, arriving with bags of whatever she could dig up from the garden, and on visits to her garden one was always sure to come away with some special treasure. One of the best plants I have from Primrose is a white form of *Crocus longiflorus*, collected by her in Malta several years ago. It is a much nicer plant than 'Nancy Lindsay's hardy aroid' which I was given as a very special treat some years earlier and which I still have. I think, Primrose, I would prefer to remember you by your *Crocus*, if you don't mind.

### **Beetles attracted by *Aristeas***

*Oryx*, the Journal of Fauna and Flora International (formerly the FFPS - Fauna & Flora Preservation Society), reports mainly on conservation matters involving fauna, seldom much about plants and even less about bulbs, but their October 1996 number (Vol. 30, Number 4) has an interesting item about two new species of *Aristea* (Iridaceae) which have been discovered in the south-western Cape region of South Africa. These are to be called *A. cantharophilia* (Greek, *Kantharos*, a beetle and *-philia*, loving) and *A. teretifolia* (round-leafed, i.e. cylindrical) and are unusual in this genus of frequently blue-flowered plants in having pale flowers with darker markings and orange anthers and pollen; whereas most species are visited by bees, these two are apparently pollinated by beetles - monkey beetles, to be more accurate (*Lepithrix* species). At present we have no more details about these two species but will pass on any information as soon as it comes along.

### **The Good Bulb Guide and the IPP**

The same volume of *Oryx* as mentioned above also reports on *The Good Bulb Guide* leaflet which includes details of the Indigenous Propagation Project in Turkey. The *Guide* contains an short introduction giving

background information about the trade in wild-collected bulbs, followed by suggestions as to what individuals can do to help conserve wild bulbs, a list of companies that have pledged 'to never knowingly sell wild bulbs', companies that have pledged to clearly label all wild bulbs 'From wild Source', notes on how buyers might tell that a bulb is wild-collected rather than nursery-produced, and details of the IPP - the Indigenous Propagation Project.

The IPP is a collaborative scheme in Turkey between the Turkish Trust for nature Conservation (the DHKD), Turkish bulb traders and Fauna and Flora International, with additional funding from the World Wildlife Fund, to encourage local villagers to grow and propagate the bulbs in their region - at present mainly *Galanthus* and *Eranthis* - as opposed to digging them up for sale in huge quantities, directly from the wild. This way, the villagers continue to receive an income from their native bulbs, wild stocks are no longer depleted and the consumers receive a better, nursery-grown, product.

Hopefully this idea will catch on and in time there will be knowledgeable local growers or enthusiasts who will select, propagate and distribute an increasingly interesting range of plants. Many countries now have legislation against collecting (which is interpreted as exploitation) to safeguard the natural resources for their own interests and one can foresee the day when the only way to introduce new plants will be via schemes such as this. In Turkey, for example, it is already against the law to collect anything without official permission and the appropriate documents; nevertheless, many people from European countries do still go 'on holiday' and collect bulbs without hindrance (and they are probably doing very little damage when collections are confined to a few bulbs or seed) but nevertheless it is against the law and inevitably sooner or later there will be court cases. Turkey is the most frequently quoted country when bulb collecting is being discussed; this is not only because it is rich in bulb species but because it is so accessible from Europe by car and is an inexpensive and safe place in which to travel. There are many other countries such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Tadjikistan that are full of fascinating hardy bulbs, but, at present, they are not the most congenial of places to visit.

This propagation project recalls a memorable visit to Turkey in 1988 when I accompanied the late and much-missed Dr Onno Wijnands from Wageningen, Noel McGough from Kew, Mike Read, representing the then FFPS, and Dr Peter and Maria Wertel from Heidelberg on an EC fact-finding tour of the bulb-collecting areas of Turkey, and a few of the nurseries. Even then there were a few fledgling nursery beds being set up in the villages of the Taurus but with little in the way of direction and it is good

to see that this project has come to fruition - literally fruition, for 1996 saw the first crop of bulbs from these village nurseries. I will not report more fully on the IPP since it has had wide coverage in many publications and I am sure that most of the BN subscribers will have seen the articles and splendid photographs showing the villagers of Dumlugöze with their first harvest.

### ***The red Lilium canadense***

In the periodical *Castanea* 61(2): 196-197 (1996) [ this is the Journal of the Southern Appalachian Botanical Society] it is reported that the red-flowered variant of the graceful eastern North-American lily, *L. canadense*, has been re-discovered in North Carolina, in Graham County, the first documented occurrence in North Carolina of this red subspecies, which is known as subsp. *editorum*, in over 20 years. Even so, it appears to be a very rare plant in that State, with only nine specimens in three colonies; it is, however, known elsewhere. The plants were recorded by Irene M. Rossell of the University of North Carolina. For those who are not familiar with this particular subspecies, it was described by Fernald in 1943 and is distinguished from typical *L. canadense* by the red flowers and broader leaves; the distribution is rather more southerly in the Appalachian Mountains, from Pennsylvania to Alabama. The epithet *editorum* means 'of high places', it being an inhabitant of rocky wooded slopes and meadows in generally somewhat drier habitats than *L. canadense* itself.

### ***Colchicums in Crete***

On a recent and very enjoyable visit to Crete with a group of fellow members of the Cyclamen Society I was fascinated by the *Colchicum* species encountered - and the *Cyclamen*, needless to say! Especially exciting was a large colony of *Colchicum macrophyllum* that exhibited an enormous amount of variation, far more than I have ever seen before; this is not an unusual situation of course and, in the case of most plant species, the more individuals you observe the more variation is recorded. With *C. macrophyllum*, which is leafless at flowering time, it was possible to check only the flower characteristics but this seemed a worthwhile exercise since there was clearly a great range of flower shapes, colours and sizes. The colour varied from a fairly rich pinkish-purple with very conspicuous tessellation to paler shades with obscure tessellation, a few pure whites and some near-white with darker purple tips to the segments. The perianth segments ranged from broad, blunt and overlapping to narrower, pointed and not overlapping, and this, coupled with an overall flower shape from short, stocky and funnel-shaped to tall, slender and

more wineglass-shaped, made for striking differences in the general appearance. Just to give three examples from the population seen last autumn, in one of the flowers the perianth segments were 48 x 8 mm (a length:width ratio of 6:1) and in another they were 60 x 12 mm (a length:width ratio of 5:1); these two thus had flowers which were rather slender and 'spidery'. As a contrast I chose one of those with 'stocky' flowers and this had segments 50 x 20 mm, a length:width ratio of only 2.5:1. This amount of variation, coupled with the variable segment shape and colour mentioned above made for a quite remarkable range of forms.

*Colchicum macrophyllum* was originally described by B.L. Burtt in Kew Bulletin 1950: 433 (1951) from a specimen cultivated by E.A. Bowles. Over the years more specimens have been seen and it is now known to occur more widely in Crete, on the Marmaris Peninsula in south-western Turkey and on the Aegean Islands of Khalki and Rhodes between Crete and the Turkish mainland.

Other colchicums seen on this visit to Crete were *C. pusillum*, a tiny little rich pink-flowered species (rare albinos) with three or more narrow leaves visible at flowering time; *C. cretense* may or may not be distinct and clearly more observations are needed. From the huge population seen, it appeared to be generally larger and more robust than *C. pusillum* with white to very pale pink flowers and leaves absent at flowering time. On a previous autumn visit with Chris Brickell the two-leafed *C. cupanii* was seen in some quantity, but only in the north-east of Crete; this time it was found in the north-west, in a mixed population with *C. pusillum*, and I think that this represents a new record for this area of the island.

Other monocots included *Drimys (Urginea) maritima*, the whitish *Allium callimischon*, *Sternbergia sicula* and *S. lutea*, *Narcissus serotinus* (in a solid white sheet in one site), *Biarum davisii* and *Crocus laevigatus*, and of course the 'honorary monocots' *Cyclamen graecum* and *C. hederifolium*, all most enjoyable!

### ***Haylockia briquetii* - where do you belong?**

In BN 16:8 (1996) we gave a résumé of the genus *Haylockia* (Amaryllidaceae), listing all the names that have been published in this little South American genus. One of them was *H. briquetii*, first published as a *Zephyranthes* in 1931 by J.F. Macbride and subsequently moved to the genus *Haylockia* in 1938. Browsing one day through back numbers of *Plant Life* [now called *Herbertia*, the journal of the International Bulb Society (see BN 10:2)] I came across another, and very surprising, reference to this plant. In the 1982 *Plant Life*, pages 116-117, Pierfelice Ravenna wrote that he had examined a photo of the type specimen of this species, which is deposited in the Field Museum, Chicago, and was of the

opinion that it had been classified not only in the wrong genus but the wrong family! Ravenna regards *Zephyranthes* (or *Haylockia*) *briquetii* as a member of the Iridaceae and, more precisely, referable to the genus *Mastigostyla*. It does seem most extraordinary that Macbride would have made such a mistake; Ravenna comments upon the bulb, the leaves, the spathes and the perianth segments not agreeing with *Zephyranthes* but makes no mention of the fact that there should be six stamens as opposed to three if it is in the Iridaceae, a feature that should be immediately obvious. Clearly this specimen needs a close scrutiny to decide at the very least to which family *H.*, *Z.* or *M. briquetii* belongs! Whatever it is, it was collected by Weberbauer in Peru in the Dept. of Moquehua at Carumas near the Ticsani volcano at 4000 metres on 27/28 February 1925.

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*Haylockia* - corrections and additional information.

In BN 16:9 *Haylockia pseudocolchicum* was stated to have been collected in Bolivia in the 'Cerro de Onero'. This should read Cerro de Oruro which is situated at 17° 55'S, 67°24'W. Under *H. chihuanhuaya* it was indicated that the species flowered in spring or early summer; in fact the flowering specimen cited by Cardenas from Bolivia, Frias Province, Laguna de San Sebastian, 4070 m., was collected in March, which is late summer or early autumn; the perianth tube is 4-5 cm long and the orange segments 2-2.5 cm long. The lilac-flowered *H. cochabambensis* is from Bolivia, Cercado Province, Dept. Cochabamba, near Cerro San Pablo at 2800 m.

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### ***A new subspecies of Asphodelus albus***

Z. Díaz Linfante and B. Valdés have recently described a Spanish variant of this widespread asphodel as subsp. *carpetanus*. This differs from subsp. *albus* in having relatively larger perianth segments and normally a branched inflorescence, whereas in subsp. *albus* it is most frequently unbranched. The size of the segments is given as 14-20 mm long, 3-5.5 mm wide so the spread of the whole flower when fully open could be as much as 3-4 cm that, for an asphodel, would be quite impressive. I have not found any of the *Asphodelus* species very hardy or persistent in our garden, although some of them do grow quite well on the lighter soil down by the River Thames at Kew not far away; the beautiful dwarf pink *A. acaulis* seems to be fairly frost-hardy but is really better in pots under glass since it flowers so early, in late winter. This new subspecies of *A. albus* might be worth a try since it occurs in the mountains of central Spain, in the Sierra de Guadarrama and Sierra de la Peña de Francia, where it must experience quite severe winters.

The full paper can be found in *Lagasalia* 17(2): 273-275 (1994).



## ***Bulbs and Mythological Names*** - by Brian Halliwell

When Linnaeus was devising new names for genera, he made use of ancient Greek and Roman deities and other mythological characters, as have other botanists who followed him. A number of these have been applied to genera of bulbous plants.

Beauty is more often associated with females but there were four males renowned for their appearance and they have not been overlooked in the quest for generic names. **Narcissus** was so beautiful that he fell in love with his own reflection. **Hyakinthos** was a beautiful youth killed accidentally by Apollo who was teaching him to throw the discus; in addition to the genus *Hyacinthus* there is the diminutive *Hyacinthella* and the comparative *Hyacinthoides*. **Endymion** was another beautiful youth loved by Juno, and the common English bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) was formerly known as *Endymion non-scripta*; Endymion's admirer is also commemorated in a group of splendid irises, the Junos, known to some authorities as the genus *Juno* [maybe we should try a companion planting of Junos and bluebells? After all, they flower at about the same time! - Ed.]. The handsome **Paris** loved **Helen of Troy**; flowers of nearly all species of *Paris* although interesting are not especially beautiful, but then neither is the genus *Helenium*, named for his amorata.

The South African genus *Tritonia* is named for **Triton**, son of Poseidon, Greek god of the sea who could summon up storms by blowing into a conch shell. **Pleione**, an ocean nymph, fell in love with Atlas and their daughters were the Pleiades [hopefully not as prolific as *Pleione* cultivars are becoming! - Ed.]. The beautiful monotypic *Calypso bulbosa*, which has a circum-polar distribution, is named for the nymph **Calypso** who fell in love with Ulysses, while *Serapias*, another genus of terrestrial orchids, was named for **Serapias** an Egyptian god.

**Iris**, who was one of the harpies, was a messenger of the gods and also goddess of the rainbow. **Iphigenia**, daughter of Agamemnon, is commemorated in a genus of primarily tropical cormous plants (see BN 11:4) which has one species in New Zealand, *I. novae-zelandiae*, which might be hardy in Britain. The American genus *Zephyranthes* is named for **Zephyrus**, god of the west wind.

*Romulea*, a genus of cormous plants with a wide distribution in the Mediterranean, tropical Africa and South Africa, commemorates **Romulus** who founded Rome; Romulus and his brother Remus had been fostered as babies by a she-wolf.

- Many thanks for this interesting contribution - Eds.

### ***Allium valdesianum***

Prof. Benito Valdés, the very well-known Spanish botanist from Seville University and one of the authors of the paper above, describing the new asphodel, is commemorated in a new species of *Allium*. In the periodical *Sendtnera* 3: 95-100 (1996), S. Brullo, P. Pavone and C. Salmeri have named this southern Spanish species from the Sierra Nevada *A. valdesianum*. It flowers in July and inhabits the alpine belt at about 2500 metres, growing in rocky pastures and is a member of the section *Codonoprasum*. This means that it is a relative of the large group containing *A. carinatum* (*A. pulchellum*), *A. paniculatum*, *A. flavum* and *A. pallens*, those rather graceful alliums with small bell-shaped flowers on slender pedicels which arch over allowing the flowers to hang in a pendent position. It is a stocky plant of about 10-16 cm in height with a fairly dense umbel of flowers on pedicels at most 1 cm long; the campanulate flowers are 5-5.5 mm long, greenish-white with a purple mid-vein on each segment, so it is probably not one of the best, aesthetically speaking, of its group. The authors liken it to two of the other dwarf species in this section, *A. sibthorpiatum* and *A. parnassicum*.

### ***Tulipa sprengeri***

We have received various comments on the extraordinarily high cost of *Tulipa sprengeri* (see BN 16:1) in view of its high degree of fertility. Thanks go to Christine Skelmersdale (Broadleigh Gardens - see Catalogue review BN 11:17) for giving us the nursery viewpoint. She writes: "I don't know if you have ever tried to harvest *Tulipa sprengeri* - not only do they have an affinity for the Antipodes (well, that's all right, then - Robyn Rorhach in Australia has asked me for some! - BM) but they also produce minute bulbs that look exactly like lumps of earth. We thought we had harvested a complete patch but probably left behind at least 50%. However, this doesn't explain their high cost, which is principally because nobody grows them on a large commercial scale. When I made enquiries the Dutch growers all cited the problems mentioned above so they are therefore very much a hand-reared plant and as such the cost has to reflect not only the limited stocks but also the expense of producing them."

Thank you, Christine, for this logical explanation. Certainly, the last time I lifted any, when a border was being renovated, I found that even the flowering-size bulbs were very small and extremely deep down, at least 20-25 cm (8-10"), into our heavy clay. The soil was sieved through when dry to remove ground elder roots and at this point all the tulip bulbs were

rescued and planted elsewhere. The border was duly reconstituted but the next year there were plenty of *T. sprengeri* flowering again, so it is a great survivor.

### ***Personalities in the Bulb World - 6***

The name Regel crops up fairly frequently in anything to do with botany in Asia, and it is Dr Eduard August von Regel or his son Albert who are being referred to. Many plants carry their family name: there is *Allium regelii*, *Tulipa regelii*, the *Regelia* section of *Iris*, the small genus *Eduardoregelia* (probably a relative of *Tulipa* and *Gagea*), *Fritillaria regelii*, *Colchicum regelii*, *Fritillaria eduardii* and so on. Eduard Regel was born in 1815 at Gotha, Germany, and at an early age became a garden apprentice at the Grand Ducal gardens in that city, then moving on to the botanical gardens at Göttingen. In 1837 he moved to Bonn botanical



Eduard August von Regel (1815-1892)

gardens and then on to Berlin where he developed valuable literary skills working on the botanical journal *Allgemeine Gartenzeitung*. In 1842 he was appointed to the post of Obergärtner at Zürich and started, in 1843, the journal *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Gartenbau*; in 1852, the name was changed and became famous as Regel's *Gartenflora* which continued until 1937, long after his death; at first this specialised in the garden plants of Switzerland and Germany but later expanded its horizons. Many interesting plants, often new introductions, appeared in its pages, and were frequently illustrated in colour, among them many monocots. In 1855 he moved to St Petersburg, as Director of the Imperial Botanical Garden where he remained for the rest of his working life, contributing many botanical papers to that famous periodical, *Acta Horti Petropolitani*, including a write-up of the results of the plant hunting expeditions (1876-1888) in Central Asia of his son Dr Albert von Regel (1845-1908) who collected some 34,000 herbarium specimens of what was then a poorly-

known flora. Not surprisingly, some plants are named after Regel Junior, often using his forename, for example *Tulipa albertii*, *Gymnospermium albertii* and *Eremurus albertii*.

During his period of office at St. Petersburg, Eduard Regel described and introduced into cultivation many plants, particularly from Central Asia; he gave generously to foreign botanic gardens and nurseries so that the new



plants were disseminated. He also founded the Russian Horticultural Society. Perhaps the most significant work he produced was the only monograph of the genus *Allium* ever to appear, in 1875; in the absence of anything comprehensive on the genus (there are Flora accounts for individual areas) we were still regularly referring to it when I was working at Kew a few years ago!

As mentioned above, the journal Regel's *Gartenflora* continued under various editors until 1937. On looking through the final volume I was very surprised to see a photograph of some daffodils captioned 'Neue spalkronige Narzissen', or split corona daffodils. I was not aware that they had appeared so early on the scene.

There are so many excellent Central Asian bulbs bearing the Regel name that they would make an interesting exhibit-with-a-difference for a spring show - just an idea!

### ***Muscari ambrosiacum***

Jane McGary from Estacada, Oregon has raised a point which I have for many years been intending to look into, concerning the identity of this attractive grape hyacinth. Jane writes: "I have to go back thru the issues to see if you have discussed '*Muscarimia ambrosiacum*' or whatever it is. People send it to the NARGS Seed Exchange, for which I am preparing the catalog this year."

I don't remember dealing with this before and I think that it is something which needs some extra research - cytogenetics might well help - but I can give some information. Although horticulturally it is one of the better-known of its group, botanically it appears to have been dismissed with little comment. The two or three species forming this group are known as the musk hyacinths; they are distinctive and the group can be treated as a separate genus (*Muscarimia*) or as a subgenus of *Muscari*. I have always

thought that they were worthy of some high level of recognition - perhaps even as distinct genera - since they appear to be genetically distinct; another of the groups, *Leopoldia* (the tassle hyacinths) should have similar status, leaving *Muscari* for the true grape hyacinths such as *M. botryoides*. There are no recorded hybrids between *Muscarimia* and *Muscari* species (or between *Leopoldia* and *Muscari*, or *Muscarimia* and *Leopoldia*), although that in itself is not necessarily conclusive. Dr Peter Davis, who made a special study of *Muscari*, clearly regarded the groups as distinct since they were given subgeneric status in the *Flora of Turkey* Vol. 8 (1984). It is probably best to follow this broad view of *Muscari*, at least until some more detailed studies have been undertaken to show whether there is any fundamental reason why they should be given generic status.

The *Flora of Turkey* recognises only two species of subgenus *Muscarimia*, *Muscari muscarimi* and *M. macrocarpum*. The first is the true musk hyacinth, long known as *M. moschatum* Willd. (1809) but this is pre-dated by *M. muscarimi* Medikus (1791); this has, according to the *Flora of Turkey* key, flowers of a dirty greenish- or greyish-white, 7-9 mm long. The other species, *M. macrocarpum*, is more colourful with flowers bright yellow, usually longer at 10-12 mm long. Both are fragrant, the former with a musk-like scent, the latter more fruity in quality.

The name which Jane McGary is questioning, *M. ambrosiacum*, appears in the *Flora of Turkey* as a synonym of *M. muscarimi* with the reference "Moench, Meth. 633 (1794)"; this is Conrad Moench's *Methodus Plantas Horti Botanici et Agri Marburgensis*, based on the plants at the Marburg Botanical Garden. From the text it appears that Moench was merely publishing a name change for the well-known musk hyacinth, so on this basis the *Flora* is correct in regarding *M. ambrosiacum* as a synonym.

However, the situation is not quite as clear as it seems. In the wild *M. muscarimi* varies in colour, often a rather dirty creamy-white like putty or a very pale greyish-blue. The plant which is cultivated nowadays as *M. ambrosiacum* has quite attractive smoky-pearl-blue flowers as well as an excellent scent, which is why Moench chose *ambrosiacum*. In Greek mythology ambrosia was the food of the gods, conferring immortality upon those who sampled it, so *M. ambrosiacum* may be worth at least a sniff a day just in case there is anything in the story.

The question remains as to whether this is a distinct species or a variant of *M. muscarimi* and it seems to me that more fieldwork is required before a decision can be made. The yellow-flowered *M. macrocarpum* is regarded as a plant of low altitudes (sea level to 800 m) in the extreme south-west of Turkey (the Marmaris region) and the Aegean Islands of Ikaria, Kalimnos, Kos, Samos, Simi, Amorgos (in the Cyclades) and Crete. On the other hand, *M. muscarimi* is thought to inhabit higher altitudes (up to

1920 m), only in south-west Turkey and rather more inland than coastal. A few years ago I saw several populations of species of this group which extend the known distribution in western Turkey beyond that recorded in *Flora of Turkey*, both eastwards and northwards, but if anything, these have added to my confusion! One collection has flowered in cultivation and certainly has pale smoky-lilac coloured flowers and could be interpreted as *M. ambrosiacum* while another is ivory white with a dark brown 'rim' of perianth lobes and could pass for *M. muscarimi*.

With the state of knowledge as it is at present I would prefer not to lose sight of the name *M. ambrosiacum* in synonymy under *M. muscarimi*. Since the plant in cultivation under this name is quite uniform it could usefully be referred to as *M. muscarimi* 'Ambrosiacum' to indicate its affinities and that, at least horticulturally, it is distinct.

***Colchicum gonarei* - not new, but not known to the BN staff**

Searching for other items one often encounters references to plants previously overlooked. So it was with *Colchicum gonarei*. Maybe others will be quite familiar with it but for those who might be puzzled we will pass on the information. This was described in 1978 by Ignazio Camarda in the *Bollettino della Società Sarda di Scienze Naturali* 17:227-241. It is autumn-flowering (September), without leaves at flowering time, these developing later, 3-4 in number, erect-spreading, linear-lanceolate, 10-25 cm long, 8-15 mm wide. The 1 or 2 small flowers have linear-lanceolate perianth segments only 1-2 cm long and 2-5 mm wide, the exterior 3 longer and wider than the inner 3; the segments are about 5 x shorter than the tube; the slender filaments carry yellow anthers and the slender styles are curved at their tips with papillose stigmas 0.5-1.5 mm long. Camarda collected the type specimen in Sardinia near Orani at 1070 m. on Monte di Gonare, hence the choice of name. The author compares it with *C. corsicum* from neighbouring Corsica but unfortunately does not include the flower colour; however, the flower colour in colchicums is fairly limited, so it is presumably pinkish-lilac.

To try to find out the nearest relations to *C. gonarei* the obvious thing is to turn to Chris Brickell's account of the genus for *Flora Europaea* (1980). If we take the characters given in the above description and assume that the flower colour is not a tessellated pattern, we cannot arrive at a proper conclusion, which is promising since it may mean that this is a distinct species. The nearest in characters are *C. corsicum*, but this has larger flowers and a stigma not more than 0.5 mm long, or one of the *C. autumnale* group of species, but again it fails to agree with any of them, on the basis of the very small flowers. If we assume that it has tessellated

flowers, the *C. autumnale* group species are again the nearest in description, but not very convincingly so.

The only autumnal leafless species definitely acknowledged for Sardinia are *C. alpinum*, *C. neapolitanum* and *C. bivonae*; the first has small flowers but with pin-head-like stigmas, the second has much larger flowers (segments 3-4.5 cm long) and the third has even larger flowers with purple anthers. So, if anyone happens to be holidaying in Sardinia in the near future, do keep an eye open for this, since BN, and I am sure a certain CB, would be very interested to hear from you!

### **More on the Crocus Sack**

Continuing the saga of the "Crocus Sack" (see BN 12:12 and BN 13:11), we have received what seems to be the last word on the matter - if, indeed, there is ever a last word about anything. David Stephens, the guardian of one of the National Collections of Crocus, sent kindly sent us a print-out from *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. 3, (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1992), the electronic version of which David has on his computer. It shows that both Judy Glattstein and Jane McGary were correct in their suggestion as to the derivation of this. The notes tell us that a gunny sack is: a bag or sack made of gunny, also called crocus sack, croker sack, tow bag, tow sack or tow bag. It is a large sack made from loosely woven, coarse material such as burlap.....the usual term is gunnysack which ultimately comes from a Sanskrit word for jute or hemp fibre....."In the Lower South the same type of bag is called a crocus sack or a croker sack.....Crocus is a coarse, loosely woven material once worn by slaves and laborers and common in colonial New England. It probably took its name from the sacks in which crocus or saffron was shipped."

David's comment is 'ain't PCs marvellous'!! Yes, I agree, they are: but I could quite easily spend hours zooming in on maps of places I can never hope to visit and playing with an amazing encyclopaedia - one has to be very restrained with a computer in the household!

### **Hyacinthaceae in tropical East and North-East Africa**

We have already reported on the *Flora of Tropical East Africa* account of the Liliaceae/Hyacinthaceae (see BN 15:3) covering Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, but this paper extends the geographical coverage to include Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. The 9 genera listed are the same, so the list is, not surprisingly, very similar. The species count for East Africa was 31 and only 3 'extras' are recorded for the extended area. For convenience I am repeating the table given in BN 15 with the additional North-East Tropical African species shown in bold:

Albuca:	A.abbyssinica, A.kirkii, A.tenuis
Bowiea:	B.volubilis
Dipcadi:	D.gracillimum, D.longifolium, D.marlothii, D.vaginatium, D.viride.
Drimia:	D.altissima, D.brachystachys, D.calcarata, D.congesta, D.elata, D.exigua, D.indica, D.macrocarpa, D.porphyrantha, D.simensis.
Drimiopsis:	D.barteri, D.botryoides, D.fischeri, D.maculata.
Ledebouria:	L.cordifolia, L.edulis, L.kirkii, L.revoluta, L.somaliensis, L.urceolata.
Ornithogalum:	O.donaldsonii, O.gracillimum, O.tenuifolium
Schizobasis:	S.intricata.
Scilla:	S.nervosa.

The paper by Brita Stedje (University of Oslo) and Mats Thulin (Uppsala University) is published in *Nordic Journal of Botany* 15(6): 591-601 (1995) and includes much information: there is a key to the genera and keys to the species within each genus, literature references to each species, their type specimens, distributions, synonyms and chromosome numbers.

The Ethiopian endemic *Ledebouria urceolata* is a new species, described for the first time in this paper and an illustration is provided. It is a plant of up to 30 cm in height with spotted oblanceolate leaves and racemes of purple urn-shaped flowers, rather small at about 5 mm long but produced in fairly dense racemes up to 12 cm long. It is described as growing on rocky outcrops at 2320-2750 m altitude.

### **More information on Lycoris**

If this goes on, we will be accused of running a Lycoris Newsletter! The latest paper we have encountered on these Asiatic "*Nerine* look-alikes" (or is it that nerines are "*Lycoris* look-alikes"?) is in the *Korean Journal of Plant Taxonomy* 25,4: 237-254 (1995); it is 'A taxonomic study of the genus *Lycoris* (Amaryllidaceae) based on morphological characters' by K.H. Tae and S-C. Ko of the Hannam University, Taejon. Unfortunately for us, it is mainly in Korean. However, there is an abstract in English and the tables showing comparative measurements are clear enough.

The last time we reported extensively on this genus (in BN 12:6) we gave a list of the species recognised by the Chinese authors of the paper for the genus as a whole. The current authors, dealing mainly with the Korean representatives only, recognise 10:

*L.radiata*, *L.chinensis* var. *sinuolata*, *L.albiflora*, *L.aurea*, *L.chejuensis*, *L.flavescens*, *L.squamigera*, *L.sanguinea* var. *sanguinea*, *L.sanguinea* var.



*koreana* and *L.sanguinea* var. *kiushiana*. Of these, *L.chejuensis* and *L. chinensis* var. *sinuolata* do not appear in the earlier (1994) paper, and *L. flavescens* and *L. albiflora*, which are apparently regarded as species here, were treated as [probably] hybrids in the 1994 paper. The tables in English give a lot of comparative information about these 10 *Lycoris*; some 40 characters are listed ranging from flowering period, flower number and colour, leaf number, colour and time of appearance, through to measurements of all the individual parts.

At present we do not have the descriptions of the two new taxa mentioned above (*L.chejuensis* and *L. chinensis* var. *sinuolata*) which were published in 1993, but these will be reported on in the next issue of BN.

### ***From the Postbag***

Don Lee from Harpenden has taken up the question of that familiar problem of non-flowering *Lycoris*. He recalls that: 'Peter Vandertang, of *Nerine* 'Mansellii' fame, used to grow *Lycoris* in large pots perched on the hot water pipes along the south face [i.e. the warm side in the northern hemisphere] in the greenhouse where he grew nerines for the cut flower trade. He told me that this was the only way that he had found to produce flowers. When grown in the soil with the nerines he got only leaves.' Don continues: 'The best *L. squamigera* I have seen were growing outside in a south facing sloping bed in the botanic gardens in Budapest. Perhaps they need cold winters and hot summers.'

And Jocelyn Bell adds another comment to the non-flowering *Lycoris* debate. Writing from Wanganui, New Zealand, she says of *L. aurea*: 'we have never succeeded in flowering this beauty (presumably Terry Hatch further north of us has!) but we have a vivid memory of seeing it in full flower in Sydney, Australia, some years ago. Mrs Mary Dougan had planted about 15 ft of it outside her front fence, "outside", she said, "because it is like a weed, though a nice one, and I don't know how to cope with the excess bulbs. It always flowers prolifically every year, and I don't give it any attention." Jocelyn adds that 'this marvellous plantswoman is now in her 90s, sadly going blind, but the garden in the retirement village where she now lives, bears ample testimony to her presence.' One day the Editor of BN will take the time to go through all the records of free-flowering *Lycoris* and check on the climate in each of the localities using *The World Weather Guide* to see if they have anything in common; I suspect heat combined with moisture in summer is at least part of the answer.

Christine Skelmersdale has some useful comments on *Narcissus* 'Picarillo' (*N. minor* x *N. watieri* - see BN 16:6). She writes: "We [i.e. Broadleigh Gardens nursery] briefly grew this plant, which Brian [Mulligan] let us have, but despite planting it in two different parts of the garden we have failed to satisfy it and it has gradually dwindled. I think there is still a small stock at Rosemoor from Lady Anne's original planting. Sadly it doesn't seem to be a very good, reliable garden plant - presumably *N. watieri* has made it somewhat tender. To be honest where on earth do you grow a bulb that has as one parent a woodland plant and the other a sun-loving jonquil? I split my stock and tried them in two locations to try and suit the two parents but this didn't work. Sad, as it is quite a pretty little plant although in fact if one is honest there are now many hybrids with better proportions."

The item on *Colchicum pannonicum* (BN16:12) and its link with *C. autumnale* was also noted by Christine Skelmersdale: "We originally obtained this plant from Michael Hoog and I thought that perhaps you might like to have the original description from his 1987 catalogue":

<p><i>pannonicum</i> Griseb. et Schenk *; wild source; originally from Rumania, Transsylvania and received through Kamon Arboretum, Western Hungary; flowers bright mauve violet, with a white line starting at the base of each segment; long perianth tubes of deeper colouring; height 12-15 cm; IX-X.</p>
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Christine continues to say that she is certain that it (*C. pannonicum*) is exactly the same as the pre-war collected plant grown as 'Nancy Lindsay' and asks what it should be called. She adds: "Whatever it is, it's a very good garden plant and I think much more vigorous than *C. autumnale* itself and certainly much earlier flowering."

In fact, the R.H.S. Committee referred to in BN 16 has now compared the stocks of *C. pannonicum* and *C. 'Nancy Lindsay'* and decided that they are the same and that the name should be *C. autumnale* 'Nancy Lindsay'.

Paul Hanson has written from Jersey, sending a clipping from *The Times* of 12 September 1996. It appears that a team of Doctors and Chemists are investigating certain bulbs as possible sources of anti-AIDS drugs. Prof. Colin Reynolds of John Moores University, Liverpool, and Dr. Pierre Rizkallah have investigated several bulbs including bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*) and daffodils and say that 'plant proteins called lectins could stop the virus that causes AIDS from taking over the body's disease-fighting cells.' Indications are that the results are 'promising'.

## Catalogues

Don't be misled by the name of J.L. Latil's nursery in Lazer, France. It is called *Lewisia*, and it is true that there are lewisias on the list, but much more besides. The main 'bulbous' interest is in species irises, and particularly the bearded, 'Pogon' species. Some of those offered, although well-known, are not generally available in the trade, for example *I.taochia*, *I.reichenbachii*, *I.variegata*, *I.marsica*, *I.imbricata* and the southern France representatives of *I.lutescens* which Jean-Louis Latil has studied and considers different from *I.chamaeiris* which he also offers from originally wild-source material. The nursery specialises in North American plants, many of them grown from wild-collected seed; there is, for example, an amazing list of 77 *Penstemon* species - but I digress, these are not bulbs! J.L. Latil, "Lewisia", Le Maupas, 05300 Lazer, France (catalogue - £2 cash, please).

North Green Seeds are offering seeds of a large range of interesting plants, many non-bulbous of course, but there are plenty of bulbs too for the enthusiast: *Colchicum corsicum* and *C. micranthum* (seed from plants of known pedigree), *Erythronium sibiricum*, *Fritillaria davisii*, *F. epirotica*, *F. pyrenaica* 'Lutea' (we are warned that only in the second generation will some have pure yellow flowers), *F. roylei*, several *Galanthus* species, the tiny blue *Hyacinthus tabrizianus* (or *Bellevalia tabriziana*, which has all but disappeared from the trade), *Leucojum roseum*, *Lilium ledebourii* and my favourite grape hyacinth with strongly bicoloured spikes, *Muscari aucheri*. North Green Seeds (John Morley & Richard Hobbs), 16 Witton lane, Little Plumstead, Norwich NR13 5DL, U.K. (catalogue £1 + postage).

Paradise Centre is always a good source of interesting plants and the 20th Anniversary list contains a great many, separated into 'bulbs' and 'plants'. Even the most hardened bulb enthusiast should browse through the 'plants' part as well as the bulbs, for this is where I found that lovely Solomon's seal relative *Disporopsis pernyi*, *Disporum flavens*, *D. sessile* 'Variegatum' and *D. smithii*, *Polygonatum stewartianum*, *Liriope muscari* 'Monroe's White', several trilliums (including *T. recurvatum*), uvularias and a range of *Tricyrtis* - all lovely woodlanders, and definitely monocots if not bulbous. Paradise Centre, Twinstead Road, Lamarsh Bures, Suffolk, CO8 5EX, U.K. (catalogue £1.20 or 5 x 1st class stamps).

Although too late for the 1996 list of course, I was most impressed by the bulbs offered by **Hythe Alpines** last year - a separate bulb list. Here are just a few which caught the eye, but remember that they may not be on the 1997 list, of course: *Allium olympicum* (a dwarf good pink form), the

neat little autumnal *Colchicum cupanii* with two leaves at flowering time, *Chionodoxa cretica*, the rare pink/purple *Corydalis parnassica* and even rarer yellow *C. schanginii* subsp. *ainii*, white *Crocus goulimyi* var. *leucanthus*, the relatively new *Muscari (Leopoldia) mirum* (see BN 7:15) and some fascinating small *Narcissus* species, forms and hybrids, mostly of the *bulbocodium/cantabricus/romieuxii* group. A supplementary list in autumn offered *Crocus banaticus* 'Albus', *C. pelistericus*, *Fritillaria alburyana*, *Iris paradoxa choschab*, *Lilium dauricum alpinum* 'Kurile Dwarf', *Narcissus cordubensis* and *Solenomelus sisyrinchium*, and many more treasures. Hythe Alpines, Methwold Hythe, Thetford, Norfolk, IP26 4QH, U.K. (export enquiries are invited).

We would be interested to know if our regular *Catalogues* feature is of interest and value to subscribers. Don't write specially, but a short note on the next renewal form would be helpful, about this or any of the other items in the Bulb Newsletter.

### Stamps

The 32 cent *Crocus* and *Galanthus* stamps from USA have already been noted (BN14:16 and 16:9 respectively), but Wayne Roderick, Jane McGary and Sally Walker have sent in some more in the same series, all 32 cents. There is a winter aconite which is undoubtedly *Eranthis hyemalis*, and an anemone, almost certainly *A. blanda* in mixed colours; also a pansy but that does not quite qualify as a bulb, although many of the perennial *Viola* species are rhizomatous of course.

### Fortunatia - a new transfer

The South American genus *Fortunatia* (Liliaceae or Hyacinthaceae - perhaps!) (see BN 15:5) has a new recruit in the form of *Scilla acaulis* Baker. This species, first described by J.G. Baker (see BN 11:8) from a dried specimen collected in Peru in 1869, was described again later on by R.E. Fries as an *Allium* - *A. sessile* - from Argentina; under this epithet it was transferred, first to the genus *Nothoscordum* by Beauverd and then to *Fortunatia* by P.F. Ravenna. Meanwhile the species had been described a third time, this time by J.F. Macbride as *Nothoscordum fictile*. The authors of the latest paper, R. Guaglianone and Silvia Arroyo-Leuenberger (in the journal *Hickenia* 2(24-31): 137, 1995) have resurrected the earliest epithet for this species, Baker's *acaulis* and agree with Ravenna that it should be in the genus *Fortunatia* as *F. acaulis*.

This sounds an interesting little plant, although possibly too insignificant to be of any great garden value. It inhabits the Andes of Peru, Bolivia and Argentina at altitudes up to 4000 metres.

## Bookends

There is exciting news on a Christmas card from Fred and Roberta Case in Saginaw, Michigan. Fred is a well-known *Trillium* specialist and he tells us that 'Our *Trillium* book will be out in May at Timber Press. It will a relief to be rid of it.' It may be a relief for you, Fred, but it is great for us, arriving (hopefully) just at *Trillium* time.

Johan van Scheepen of the KAVB - the Koninklijke Algemeene Vereeniging voor Bloembollencultuur or Royal General Bulbgrowers' Association - has notified us that the new improved and enlarged edition of the *Classified List and International Register of Tulip Names* (1996) has been published (95 Dutch Guilders + p. & p.). This is in English and includes about 2,600 tulip cultivars with their names, synonyms, the name of the breeder and/or introducer, the cultivar group, description, chromosome number, approximate height, awards etc. He tells us that the very useful *International Checklist for Hyacinths and Miscellaneous Bulbs* (1991) (85 Dutch Guilders + p. & p.) is still available; this contains long lists of the species and cultivars of many of our favourite genera with information similar to that supplied for the tulip list above. For further information, please contact Dr J. van Scheepen at the KAVB, Postbus 175, 2180 AD Hillegom, Parklaan 5, The Netherlands. Tel: +31-252-51-52-54 or fax: +31-252-51-97-14.

Since we are in the computer age (just about hanging in there), we should mention The Data Protection Act:

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