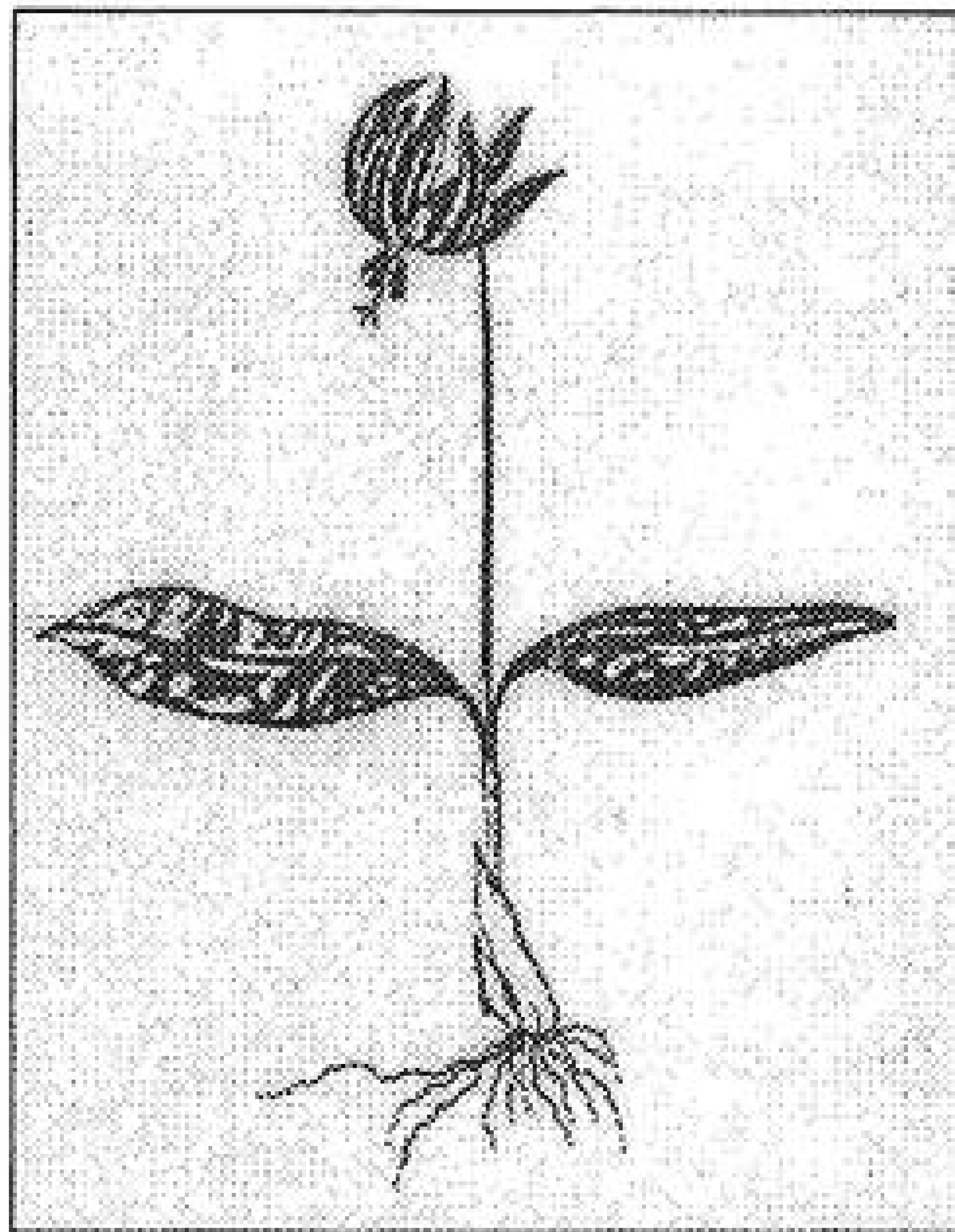


***THE BULB***  
***NEWSLETTER***



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## The Bulb Newsletter No. 21

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### ***A tale of two Ipheions - or should they be Nothoscordum?***

In recent years several ipheions have arrived in cultivation here, mostly from our friends in Argentina, and very nice they are too - both the ipheions and our friends! The debate as to whether they should be *Ipheion*, *Tristagma* or *Nothoscordum* will no doubt continue until there has been a detailed study of them at the molecular level, and my guess is that it will probably continue long after that. None of which of course affects the amount of interest and pleasure they provide in the garden.

Two species we have enjoyed in recent years are comparative newcomers to cultivation - certainly here in Britain - *I. vittatum* and *I. sessile*.

#### IPHEION VITTATUM

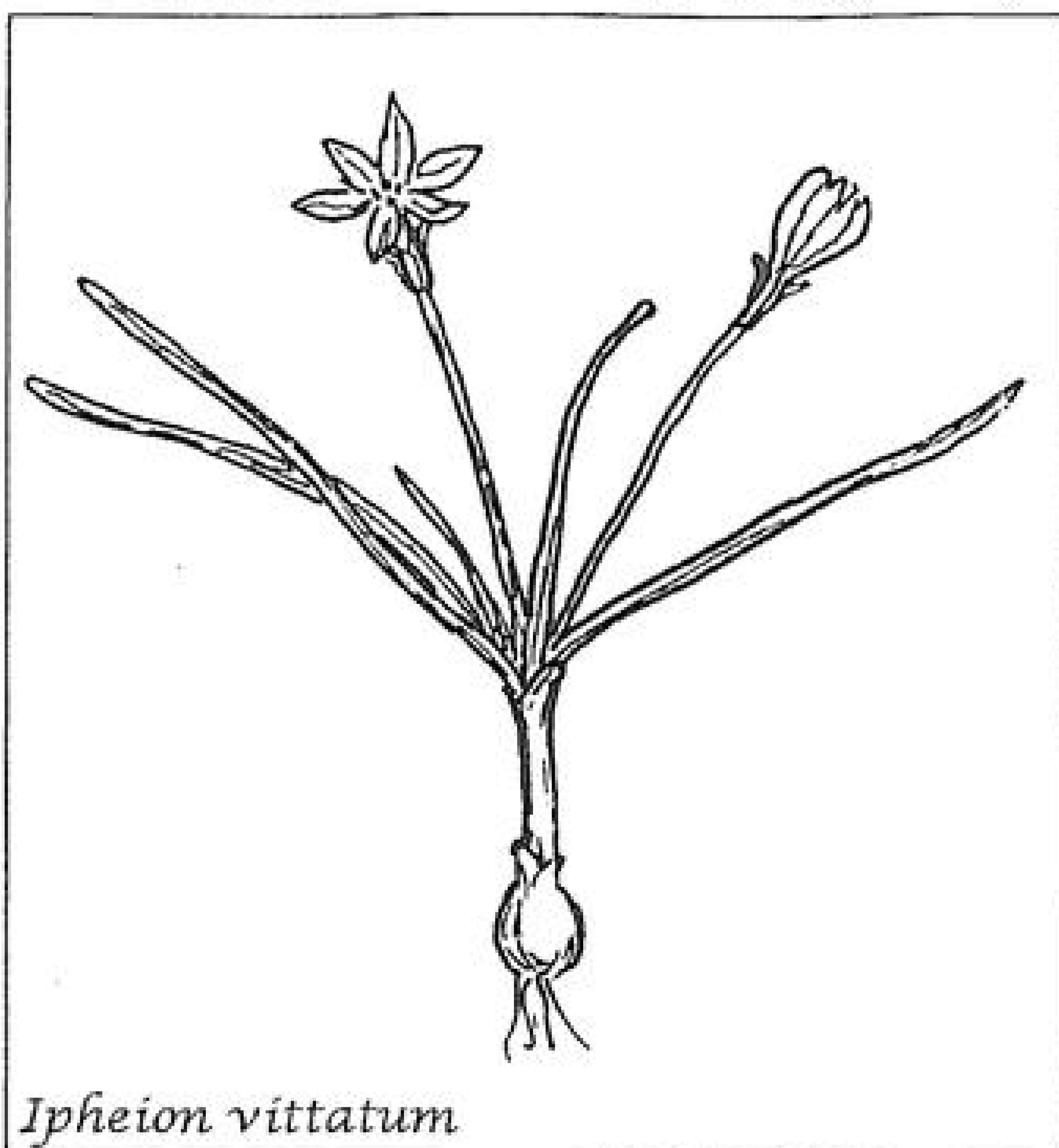
The latest one to flower, which we have been growing here in our Surrey garden - or rather cold glasshouse, as it has not been tried outside yet - is *I. vittatum*, sent to us some years ago by Patrick O'Farrell. As with so many unusual bulbs, I had known this for ages as squashed specimens in the Kew Herbarium so it is particularly pleasing to see it 'for real' at last. Let us be realistic, it is not going to receive any major awards for garden value, but it is a diminutive and delightful little plant for mid-winter in a pot on the bench where it can be viewed close-to.

Like all the members of its group, *Ipheion vittatum* has had a stormy ride through the world of nomenclature. It was described in 1879 by Grisebach as a *Milla*, transferred to *Brodiaea* by Baker in 1896, was moved on into *Beauverdia* by Herter in 1943, into *Tristagma* by Traub in 1963 and finally into *Nothoscordum* by Ravenna in 1968. In addition, in 1898 Baker described *Nothoscorum uniflorum* and in 1908 Beauverd described *Nothoscordum lloydiflorum*, but both of these appear to be the same as *I. vittatum* so are regarded as synonyms of it.

Having dealt with that minor irritation, we come to the more important matter of the details of the plant. It is about 4-6 cm tall when in flower, a little more in our poor northern light conditions but still only 8 cm at maximum, and the narrow, bright green leaves are about the same length, but they tend to spread out sideways or even lie on the ground. Each bulb produces up to 10 leaves and several flower stems, each 1-flowered, although descriptions claim

that it can have two per stem. The white flowers are held facing straight upwards and are of modest size, only about two cm long, but they have an attractive globular shape, like an electric light bulb at the bud stage, opening out to a goblet shape; each of the six perianth segments has a well-defined blackish-purple band along its centre, hence *vittatum* which means longitudinally striped. I am not sure about the scent - it is quite strong and in quality is somewhere between *Narcissus tazetta* and horse-dung, with an underlying whiff of onions!

So far in cultivation, *Ipheion vittatum* has performed very well, increasing steadily by offsets and has proved very



*Ipheion vittatum*

easy to cultivate, kept slightly dryer in summer when dormant, then with plenty of moisture (but well-drained) through the autumn-winter-spring growing period. It is reputedly a native of Uruguay, northern Argentina and southern Brazil, growing in grassland which is damp at flowering time, usually in April to June; here in the northern hemisphere it has flowered in winter, between November and January, depending upon when it was started into growth by watering.

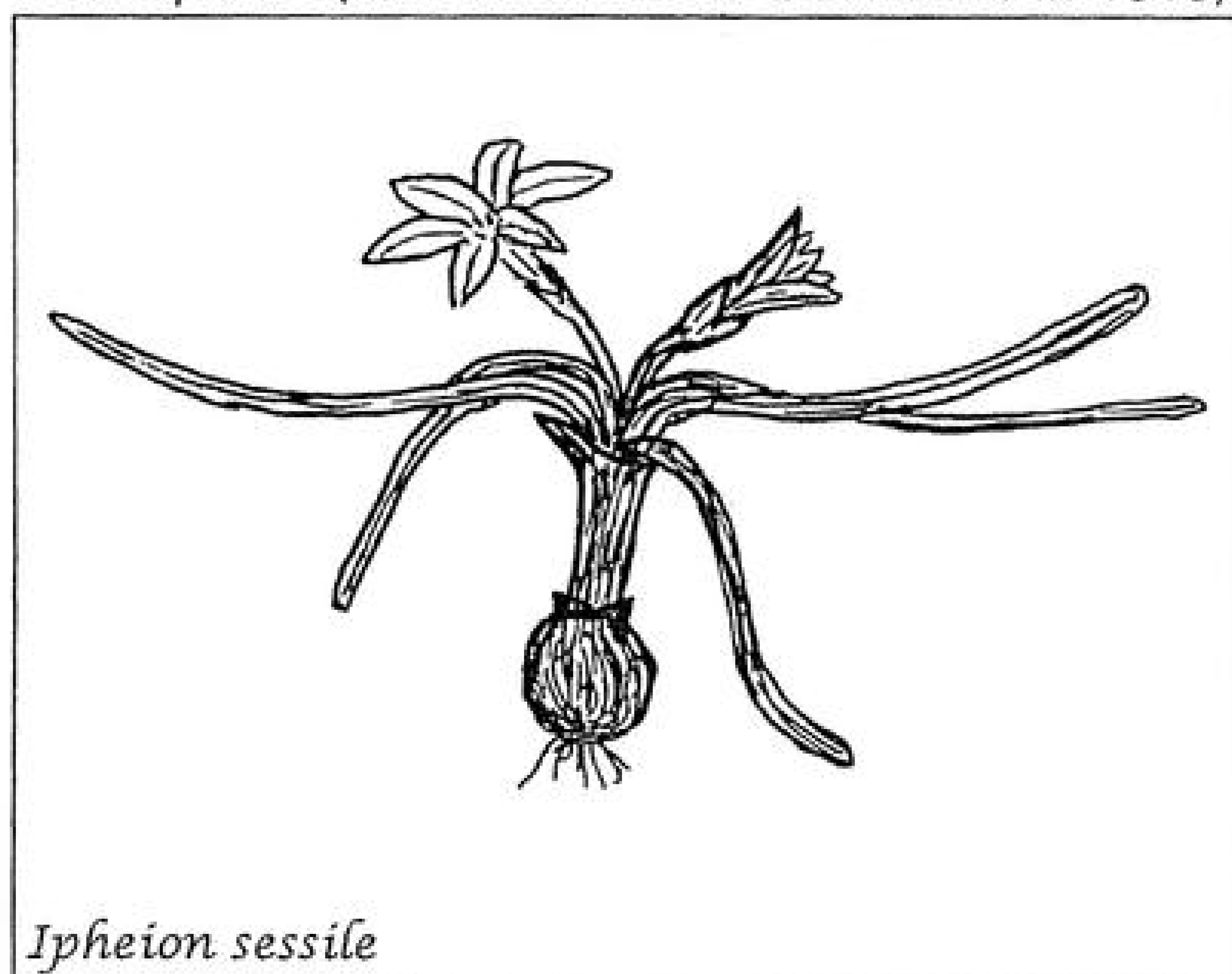
#### IPHEION SESSILE

The other one, *I. sessile*, has been growing for a rather longer period in our collection, sent by Alberto Castillo and Patrick O'Farrell about 10 years ago, and a pot of it received an RHS Preliminary Commendation in November 1996. It is an even shorter plant, the larger white flowers almost stemless (hence the name) and facing upwards but with narrower more pointed buds opening out to flat stars 3-3.5 cm across. Like those of *I. vittatum*, they are striped on the outside with a deep purple line on each segment. The narrow, bright green leaves tend to be prostrate, or they are curved, arching over towards the ground. The fragrance of the flowers is, in this case, undoubtedly quite pleasant and reminiscent of marzipan. Cultivation is exactly the same as described above for *I. vittatum* but it flowers rather earlier, usually in November, so here is another superb little plant for the unheated glasshouse

in the dull days of late autumn or early winter. *Ipheion sessile* has, like its cousin, been pushed around from one genus to another following its first description as a *Triteleia* in 1857.

However, there is a problem with the identity of the plant in cultivation as *I. sessile*, and currently I do not know the answer. The type specimen of *I. sessile* (it was first described as a *Triteleia* in 1857 and has also been named *sessiliflora*), which originated from Chile, does not look very much like the plant we are growing under this name which was collected in Uruguay. On the other hand, 'our' plant does look exactly like the type specimen of *I. recurvifolium* (first described as a *Brodiaea* in 1915) which did in fact come

from Uruguay. These two have been regarded as synonymous under the older name of *I. sessile* but I have doubts as to whether this is correct. However, I have seen only some rather poor dried specimens of the Chilean plant, and so, as it appears not to be in cultivation, it is not possible to go any further with the comparison until living plants are



*Ipheion sessile*

available. From the herbarium specimens, the Chilean *I. sessile* seems to be an even more diminutive plant than the one from Uruguay, with very narrow, upright, almost thread-like, leaves and smaller flowers.

If it does prove to be the case, that these two are different, then the plant we are growing from Uruguay should be referred to as *Ipheion recurvifolium*, but exactly which genus it belongs to is anybody's guess at present! The plant which received the P.C. is written up more fully, with a colour photograph, in the *Bulletin of the Alpine Garden Society* 65, 4: 409-411 (1997).

### ***And while on the subject of Ipheions***

Another very good *Ipheion* around in cultivation is the lovely clear pale blue one referred to as *I. uniflorum* 'Rolf Fiedler'. I have looked at this plant before, at the instigation of Brian Halliwell when we were still both at Kew, but could really find little in the way of convincing botanical features by which to

separate it from *I. uniflorum*, in spite of it being very distinct in terms of garden value. Maybe it is just a variant - and a very good one - of the well-known *I. uniflorum*, but there is another species which must be considered. This is a plant described (albeit in the genus *Tristagma*) by P.F. Ravenna\* in 1978 as *T. peregrinans*; from the description and drawing it clearly belongs in the same genus as *I. uniflorum*. This was collected in northern Uruguay, "near the top branch of the Cuchilla Negra, about 8 km W-NW of Tanqueras", growing in among stones in dark soil with *Cypella herbertii*. Ravenna writes that the species is:

"remarkable in being the only species of the genus that produces stolons from the basal plate [hence the name which means 'peregrinating', or travelling]. The species is allied to *T. [Ipheion] uniflora*, differing in the mentioned character, the more slender, recurved, or backward-spiralled leaves and smaller flowers."

The article goes on to describe a plant 10-11 cm in height a narrowly ovate bulb about 1 cm long which has ashy-brown tunics and whitish stolons produced from the basal plate; the leaves are often 4 in number, linear and ascending at first, then recurved or spiralled, ash green, 6-9 cm long, 2-2.8 mm wide. The scape (flower stem) is 6-7 cm long carrying one flower which is produced from a bilobed spathe. There is one flower per scape, 'cobalt-blue' in colour with a purplish-brown streak on the outside of the segments, 8-9 mm long, the segments joined into a tube for 8-9 mm and then spreading to form a flower 2-2.4 cm in diameter; the segments are 12-13 mm long and 3.5-3.8 mm wide.

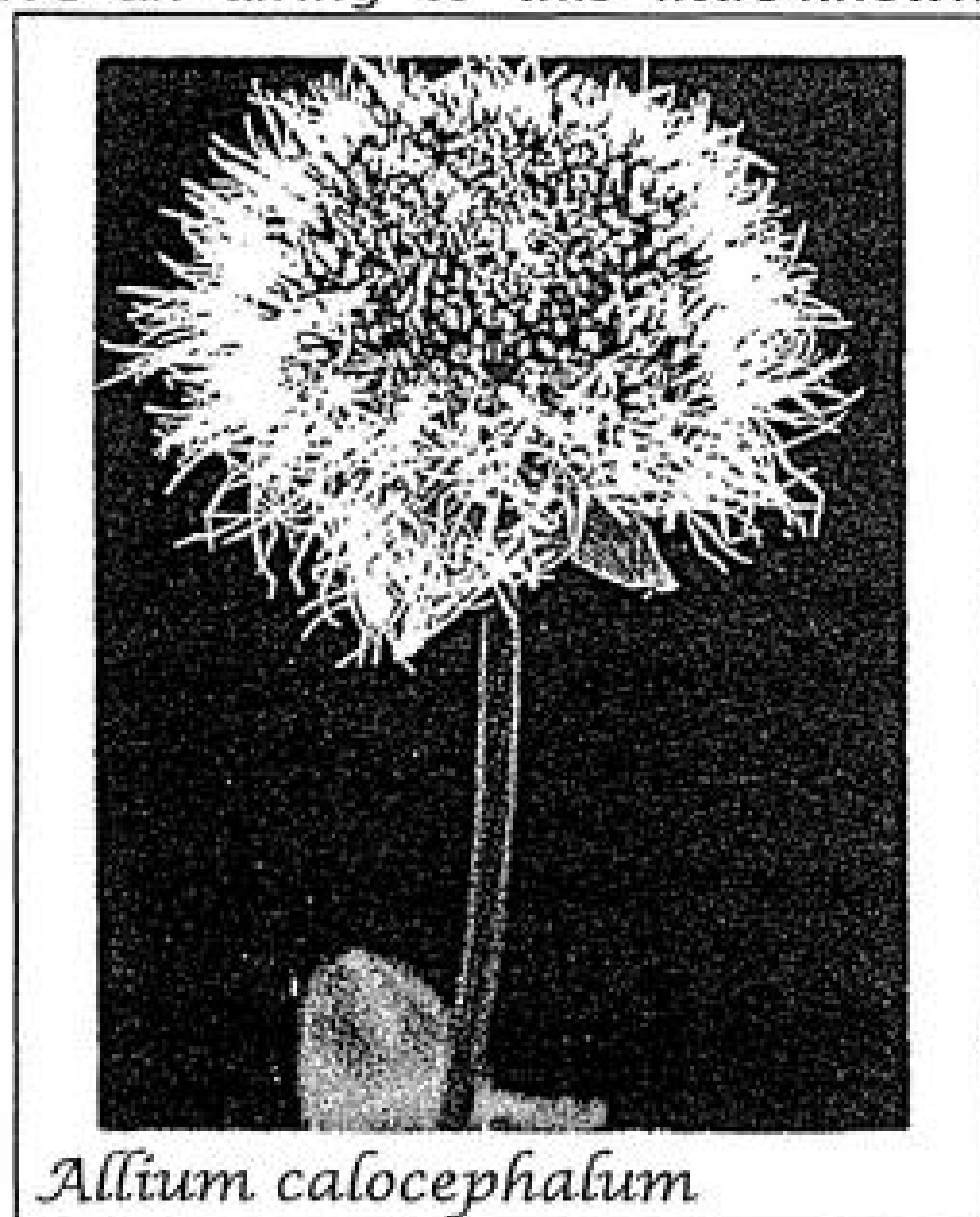
The question is, is this the plant which is being cultivated as 'Rolf Fiedler'? I have not found 'Rolf Fiedler' to be a very reliable plant outdoors here in Surrey, dwindling away and apparently frost-tender, whereas *I. uniflorum* (certainly the superb large white form 'Alberto Castillo') does very well and requires regular splitting because the clumps get so congested. Because 'Rolf Fiedler' has not done well I have not been able to observe first hand whether it 'pergrinates' or not, but Paul Christian tells me that it does so with great vigour when planted in a bulb frame, and Noel Lothian from Australia has mentioned this stoloniferous nature as well. We could really do with a wild source collection of *peregrinans* from its type locality in Uruguay to compare with 'Rolf Fiedler' before this matter can be resolved. If the plant does originate from northern Uruguay, one would expect it to be rather more frost tender than *I. uniflorum* from farther south.

\* The article by P.F. Ravenna referred to above was published in *Plant Life* (now *Herbertia*) 34: 131 (1978).

## *Allium calocephalum* - where are you now?

Searching through some *Allium* photographs for a talk a few days ago I came across two colour slides of *A. calocephalum*, of a bulb which had been collected by Oleg Polunin (Pn 5084) at Sersang in north-eastern Iraq in the 1950s. This note is intended partly to give an airing to this little-known species, partly to ask if anyone still has it, and mainly to say that, if you have, please take great care of it and please may I have the first offset!

This is a most extraordinary species, belonging to the same group as the so-called 'drumstick' alliums (of the section *Melanocrommyum*), so it has all the leaves in a basal cluster rather than scattered up the stem as in many of the species, and these are 4-5 in number, strap-like and 15-22 cm long by 1-4.5 cm wide. It can be quite tall, the stout leafless stems 30-65 cm, with an umbel up to 8 cm across; in shape this is a rather flattened hemisphere, not at all globular, and bears many creamy-white flowers - so far sounding not very different from some



others in its description. However, the appearance of the umbel is extraordinary because each flower has very long perianth segments, much longer than in any other species that I know of; those of the inner-most flowers of the umbel are the shortest at about 1.5 cm long and those of the outer-most whorls over 3 cm long. Thus, the whole umbel appears like a shaggy white head, perhaps looking more like some bizarre member of the Compositae.

*Allium calocephalum* - the name is from Greek meaning 'beautiful head' - is known only from the north-east of Iraq, in the districts of Amadiya and Rowanduz, although it is conceivable that it might also occur slightly further to the north in Hakkâri Province of Turkey or to the east just across the border in Iran. It was described in 1966 by Per Wendelbo, the author of the accounts of *Allium* for *Flora Iranica* and *Flora of Iraq*; the original specimen upon which he based his description was Polunin 5084, so if anyone is still growing the species, it is the type collection - even more valuable! It has never been common in cultivation and my guess is that it has been lost; the last time I was given some seeds they turned out to be a rather ordinary purple 'drumstick' after a wait of many years for them to reach flowering size - what a let down that was!

***Zantedeschia aethiopica* 'Crowborough' - Is it distinct?  
by Brian Halliwell**

Graham Thomas, in his book *Three Gardens* published in 1981, under a section on hardy arums, makes the following statement: "Many years ago, Lord Morton found in a garden at Crowborough, Sussex, a border of hardy arums growing fully exposed and established in sun 4' high." The cultivar 'Crowborough' is now the most widely offered selection of *Zantedeschia aethiopica*. However, of the many clumps I have seen in flower in gardens, from southern England to West Yorkshire, there is no visual difference between this cultivar and any other plants of the species. In garden books 'Crowborough' is described as a hardier form, so is hardiness reckoned to be the only criterion for its recognition?

The species is far hardier than is generally supposed; it is growing in some gardens in Halifax [northern England] at over 600 ft but during three winters I have seen none of the plants damaged by winter cold. Christopher Lloyd grew his stock in his horse pond (I assume that his thinking was that the water was the protection) whereas at Kew there was a clump in the Duke's Garden where the soil was often dust dry; plants grew equally well in the two extremes. When I was working at Kew, there were in fact four different stocks growing outside; some were those formerly used in the glasshouse displays; others were plants which had come from Ceylon; there were propagants from wild collected [i.e. South African] seed, and there were gifts of the clone 'Crowborough'. Over a period of at least 8 years, during which there were some extra-cold winters, no difference in hardiness was observed between all these stocks.

This raises some questions to which we do not currently know the answer - when was this cultivar first introduced and how was it supposed to differ, and is there really any way of distinguishing it from any other *Zantedeschia aethiopica*?

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Footnote: Judging by the comments of our friend Terry Hatch in New Zealand, who is very concerned with the conservation of the native plants, it is a pity that *Z. aethiopica* is such a tough plant - it sounds as if it has become a really serious pest in places, along with quite a number of other introductions.

**Sea daffodils thought to be in danger.**

In the Newsletter of the Center for the Protection of the Greek Flora, *Anthophoros*, it is noted that in some places the sea daffodil (*Pancratium maritimum*) is becoming scarce. To quote: "The species has disappeared from many of the sandy beaches that once formed part of its natural habitat, due to development for tourism." In Crete, sharp reductions in numbers on several beaches have been noted.

## Snowdropfests 1998

For those who are bitten by the *Galanthus* bug - and there are many - there are two snowdrop study days in the near future, both in Cambridgeshire in February.

The first, the 'Galanthus Gala', is at Bottisham Village College on Saturday February 14th (maybe *G. valentinae* will be in flower, although I believe that it has been 'sunk!'). This includes a lecture by Chris Brickell, 'Perspectives on the genus *Galanthus*', some short talks on particular groups of snowdrops, a plant sale and outings to Anglesey Abbey and Wandlebury Ring Country Park where there are naturalised colonies of snowdrops. Details from: Daphne Chappell, Cinderdine Cottage, Dymoch, Gloucestershire, GL18 2DG, England.

The second is a Cambridge Garden Course devoted to snowdrops on Thursday 26th February at Anglesey Abbey; this will include a talk about the species of *Galanthus* by Aaron Davis whose monograph of the genus will be published as one of Kew's *Botanical Magazine Monographs* by Timber Press, hopefully later this year. There will be other items such as propagation, and a tour of the Abbey and the snowdrop collection in its grounds. Details from: Lavinia Nourse, Dullingham House, Dullingham, Newmarket, CB8 9UP, England.

Unfortunately this is an extremely early year for spring bulbs here in Britain with many of them already in full flower in early January. Although some may be past their best by mid February there are always some of the later species and cultivars to admire and in any case it takes a lot to deter *Galanthus* enthusiasts!

### WORLD OF BULBS II

Not the latest Sci-Fi film, but much more! The 34th Study Weekend of the Alpine Garden Society, Birmingham and District Group is to be held on February 28th to March 1st 1998 at the Jarvis International Hotel in Solihull. It is a busy weekend, full of promise with speakers on topics far and wide: Jānis Rukšāns from Latvia talking about the bulbs of Central Asia, Rod Saunders (Silverhill Seeds) from South Africa giving a taste of the bulbs from this 'plantsman's wonderland' as he describes it, Bob and Rannveig Wallis on their many travels in search of bulbs, Chris Brickell on the genus *Colchicum*, Peter Erskine on bulbs of the southern Andes and Kit Grey-Wilson on bulbs of South-west China; the all-important cultivation aspects are covered by John Hill and David Mowle with 'Bulbs in the Open Garden' and 'Bulbs under Glass' respectively. Oh, yes, I nearly forgot - and Brian Mathew on the genus *Erythronium* and the Bulbs from *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*.

Booking forms can be obtained from:

Dr John Page, 118 Shutt Lane, Earlswood, Solihull, West Midlands, B94 6BZ, England.



### The smallest *Zephyranthes*?

Ann Kline wrote to us a while ago from Falls Church, Virginia, to say that she has successfully grown some *Zephyranthes minima* but cannot find it listed in any of her reference works. Maybe the reason it is overlooked in the literature is that it is considered too small to be of any great garden value, but a pot full in flower is really quite charming. This was first described by William Herbert in 1837 with the distribution given as Brazil but it is said to occur also in Uruguay and Argentina, according to *Flora Montevidensis* Vol. 3 (1984). Like the better-known *Z. candida*, this has white flowers facing upwards, but they are quite a lot smaller, and the two species can be separated on features of the style: *Z. minima* has a straight erect style whereas in *Z. candida* it is curved and ascending. In 1971, P.F. Ravenna in *Plant Life* 27: 68 distinguished two subspecies:

*Z. minima* subsp. *minima* with 3 fertile and 3 sterile stamens (staminodes)

*Z. minima* subsp. *hexandra* with 6 fertile stamens, and larger in all its parts.

Thank you for raising this question, Ann. We have grown this for a while as well, but I have to confess that I have never counted the number of functional stamens - another job to put on the list for the next flowering period (usually mid-summer here).

#### STAMPS

The Czech Republic has issued an 8 Kč stamp with a very good illustration of *Iris pumila* in both its purple and yellow forms.

The UK has produced a set of stamps based on some early flower paintings, one of which shows a tulip cultivar with 'broken' flower colours, striped and feathered purple-brown on a yellow ground.

Although not bulbous - but it is a monocot - a pineapple is featured on a 32 cent stamp from the USA, together with a few accompanying bugs for added interest.

### The sad *Fritillary*

David King, who is very interested in the North American species of *Fritillaria*, recently telephoned to ask the meaning of the word *tristulis* - as in *F. lanceolata* var. *tristulis*, now *F. affinis* var. *tristulis*; this is a variant of this widespread species, described in 1921 by A.L. Grant in Jepson's *Flora of California* and maintained by Bryan D. Ness as a variety of *F. affinis* in the new edition of 'Jepson'. As we know it, it is quite a good (aesthetically) form of this very variable plant, with rather large deep dusky purple bell-shaped flowers, scarcely mottled; the bulb is said to consist of very many more scales than in other variants of the species. The epithet is derived from *tristis* meaning sad, presumably referring to either the dull colour or the nodding flower; *tristulis* is a diminutive, so it means just a little sad, as opposed to very, very sad!

### ***Leucojum vernum* var. *vagneri***

Responding to a request as to where this originated, we checked on the literature and found it to date from 1886, when Otto Stapf described it, based on plants collected by a person called Vágner in what was then north-eastern Hungary, in the province of Marmaros near the town of Huszt; the former is now known as Maramureş in northern Romania, and the town appears to be Khust, just across the border in southern Ukraine. Stapf said that this variety was more robust in all its parts and was bi-flowered, and this is very much the concept of *vagneri* as we grow it today; plants under this name are usually quite robust and often produce two flowers, although not necessarily so if it is not growing strongly.

Whilst searching for references, another form of this species came to light, in the Royal Horticultural Society's Report of the Scientific Committee of 16 February 1915, with Mr E.A. Bowles in the Chair:

"Mr W.H.B. Fletcher of Aldwick Manor, Bognor, sent a number of flowers of this fine form of Snowflake, which is rarely seen or mentioned. Most of the scapes bore five or six flowers and many of the flowers were more or less abnormal in some degree, perhaps due to the vigour of the plants, which had been in his garden for about fourteen or fifteen years."

At the next meeting, on March 2, it was reported that the stems were "undergoing duplication, sometimes not complete, resulting in more than the usual number of flowers." Sometimes the flowers were joined, thus giving the malformed flowers referred to in the first report. This would now be referred to as fasciation, a fusing together of more than one stem, occasionally all the way up to and including the flower. Although this plant clearly interested the Scientific Committee at the time, it does not sound as if it is a very attractive variant of *Leucojum vernum*, and I have not heard of its existence in gardens now. It seems to me to be quite different from var. *vagneri* which has normal stems, each bearing two perfectly-formed flowers.

### ***Red lily gets full exposure in Telegraph***

It is seldom that a plant gets coverage in a national newspaper, but a lily did earlier this year, and not just a little mention but a several page, colour illustrated feature in the Telegraph's Magazine section. It was *Lilium paradoxum*, described by W.T. Stearn in 1956 and named *paradoxum* because of its similarity to both *Lilium* and *Nomocharis*. It was discovered too late to be included in Woodcock and Stearn, *Lilies of the World* (1950), but Patrick Synge in *Lilies* (Batsford, 1980) gave it a mention in the chapter 'Asiatic lilies not in cultivation'. It was collected by the Ludlow, Sherriff and Elliot expedition in June 1947 in south-east Tibet at an altitude of 3600 m and is a rather distinctive species with solitary bell-like, deep maroon-purple flowers about 7

cm across, and the leaves are carried in whorls. Thus, although the flowers look not unlike the small Himalayan lilies of the *L. nanum/oxypetalum* group, the whorled leaves clearly distinguish from these.

The article in the *Telegraph* is a good piece of journalism rather than a botanical account of the lily, but it makes a good story. It was an Exodus-organised expedition led by Kenneth Cox and David Burlinson, with this account of it written by Jenny Morris - plenty of travellers' tales and descriptions of places steeped in the romance of plant hunting, but with the thread of a hunt for the mysterious lily. Of course, they found it, or there would be no article, and there is a good photo to prove it. This shows it to be a lovely plant with the solitary deep red-purple flower held in a position slightly declined from the horizontal, thus adding to Patrick Synge's knowledge of the species. He noted that "No information is available about the poise of the flower in the living state, but it appears from dried material to be erect." Clearly this was a fun trip (obviously quite arduous at times), and a story well recounted. No seed, though!

*Iris Conference in Italy -- "Iris and Iridaceae" -- 8-10 May 1998*

"La Sapienza" University of Rome and the Società Italiana dell' Iris are organising and hosting a conference devoted to Iris and Iridaceae, to be held in Rome at the Orto Botanico, followed by an excursion to the garden of the Italian Iris Society in Florence; the latter will coincide with the annual Concorso Internazionale dell' Iris. Anyone interested in attending should apply for details of the conference and hotels to:

Prof. Maria Antonietta Colasante  
Dipartimento di Biologia Vegetale  
Universita "La Sapienza"  
P. le A. Moro 5  
00185 Roma, Italy

Fax: 00-396-4463865, email [colasante@axrma.uniroma1.it](mailto:colasante@axrma.uniroma1.it)

*The Crocus Group*

Mr K.J. Daniels of Grantham, Lincolnshire, has noted with satisfaction the formation of a Fritillaria Group of the Alpine Garden Society ( see BN 19:8) but asks: Is there a similar group for Crocus lovers?

There certainly is, and one of quite long standing. The Crocus Group is an offset of the British Iris Society (Species Group) and can be contacted via its Secretary, Ann Borrill, 153 Lime Tree Avenue, Wymondham, Norfolk NR18 0TG, UK. The Group has an excellent seed distribution which is organised by David Stephens, one of the National Collection Holders of Crocus. The 1997 list, for example, contained 61% of all known taxa (species, subspecies, etc.) and some of the excellent variants of them. There is a Newsletter and occasional visits to gardens to see Crocus collections.

### **Personalities in the bulb world - 7**

The current 'crop' of bulb enthusiasts in Britain, and probably around the world, will be very familiar with the name *E.B.Anderson*, either because they knew him, or through his writings or by hearsay, for he is often quoted in conversations. Anyone who becomes known by their initials clearly has had some considerable influence; although he died nearly thirty years ago, the mention of 'EBA' still brings instant recognition [in the same way that 'JPR' (J.P.R.Williams) does in rugby circles - sorry, it's another passion of your BN editor!).

Bertram Anderson was, of course, noted as an expert cultivator of small bulbs which he grew in a range of different gardens - seven in all during his lifetime - but mainly at Porlock in Somerset and Lower Slaughter in Gloucestershire.

Obviously it is impossible to go into great detail about the bulbous plants he grew, but one which is firmly fixed in my own mind forever is *Iris persica*, happily flowering in a raised bed outdoors, without protection, at Lower Slaughter; those who know the British climate will know that this is no mean achievement! One of the reasons for his success with a wide range of bulbs was to plant them near to small deciduous shrubs, not where they would be shaded but just near enough to benefit from the fact that the shrubs were using up moisture in summer while the bulbs were dormant. As far as I know he was the first person to advocate this, although he may have been taught by his predecessors in the same way that I inherited the idea from him. It certainly does work in a climate with unreliably dry summers, and the shrubs provide interest when the bulbs are at rest.

Bertram Anderson achieved a lot in the world of plants during his 85 years; he was a Founder Member of the Alpine Garden Society and its President from 1948 to 1953, during which time the Seed Distribution Scheme was set up and was personally managed by him for the first two years; he also served on the first RHS/AGS/SRGC Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee. The awards he received - a Gold Veitch memorial Medal, the Lyttel Cup for work with lilies and a Victoria Medal of Honour - were given as recognition of his devotion to horticulture, particularly in the field of alpines and bulbs.



However, I am sure that the over-riding impression that most people have of EBA, apart from his wide knowledge and enthusiasm, is his great generosity to share both these and his plants with others. Much of his knowledge was passed on through his books, including *Rock Gardens* (Penguin, 1959), *The Oxford Book of Garden Flowers* (Oxford University Press, 1963), *Hardy Bulbs* (Penguin, 1964), *Gardening on Chalk and Limestone* (Collingridge, 1965) and *Seven Gardens, or sixty years of gardening* (Joseph, 1973). He wrote many articles and also gave very many lectures around the country and abroad; two of these which I found particularly stimulating in my early years with plants were published in the RHS Journals, one on hellebores and one on *Erythronium* (1958). This last one indicated an in-depth knowledge of the genus and he became involved in some crossing experiments which resulted in two very good seedlings; these were passed around under EBA numbers for many years until Kath Dryden eventually named them 'Jeanette Brickell', with very pure white flowers and 'Margaret Mathew' which opens a pale clear green and lightens to creamy-green. He also introduced the excellent *Iris histrioides* x *I. winogradowii* cross, named 'Katharine Hodgkin' after the wife of his old friend Eliot Hodgkin.

I have a very cherished book in my possession; it is a copy of Patrick Synge's *Collins Guide to Bulbs*, interleaved with blank pages for notes, so that it is twice the normal thickness; there are some inscriptions inside, one of them from Patrick Synge which I will repeat, since it says a lot about EBA: "For Bertram Anderson as a small token of thanks for the help he gave the author with this book and also the pleasure which his many generous gifts of choice bulbs have given me." From EBA it went to his great friend Eliot Hodgkin, who eventually passed it on to me with a further note: "In memory of E.B. Anderson". I may - probably will - be accused of over-sentimentality, but it does make gardening so much more pleasurable to hang on to memories of gurus such as Bertram Anderson; and, it was EBA who wrote to me a few years before his death and said that he had been asked to write a book about small bulbs for Batsfords, but he did not feel that he could take it on - would I be interested? That request turned into my first book, *Dwarf Bulbs*.

There is a phrase of E.B.A.'s in the introduction to *Hardy Bulbs* which is worth bearing in mind when all seems to be going wrong in the garden and the rare bulbs are not behaving as you would like them to: "Effort is the sauce of life and success its reward."

## New bulb imports from China

The arrival of some very large consignments of plants, including several bulbous species not seen before in cultivation, has inevitably sparked off concerns about their origin. It is said that these are cultivated by small growers, dotted around China, each concentrating on one or a few 'crops' which are then brought together and marketed (through the internet) by an exporting firm. One of the non-bulbous plants to have arrived in thousands is *Helleborus thibetanus* - it is said that these are plants grown from seed collected in Gansu.

I have seen only a few of the items and am not in a position to comment generally on the plants on the list, but judging by the quality and size of the bulbs of *Fritillaria hupehensis* [see BN 2:17 and this issue, p. 15] and *F. pugiensis* [a close relative or variant of *F. verticillata thunbergii* - see BN 2: 18], they are certainly the product of very successful cultivation techniques. This would bear out a comment by Martyn Rix, following a visit some years ago, that he had been shown fields of a *Fritillaria* (*F. yuminensis*, I believe), not known in cultivation in the West but grown there for medicinal purposes.

Many plants in China are highly regarded for their medicinal value (including *Helleborus thibetanus*) and the only way of ensuring adequate supplies is to cultivate them in quantity - the Chinese have thousands of years of experience at this, far longer than the British, so we must be sure of our facts before we assume that everything imported from 'abroad' is wild dug. These imports may well be a spin-off from a large and already thriving industry - the discovery that gardeners are willing to pay good money just to look at them, rather than use them to cure illness, may be quite a novelty! I hope that my instincts in this are justified but I suspect that the truth is a combination, that some species are nursery-produced and others wild-collected.

## Requests

Stewart Preston, contacting us from New Zealand in response to an article I wrote on *Eremurus*, asks about the availability of some of the many interesting species in this rather neglected genus; he wishes to embark on a breeding programme with a view to improving the range for the cut flower market. He is also keen to contact other growers of *Eremurus* on matters of cultivation and post-harvest treatment as cut flowers.

Unfortunately, many of the species introduced by Paul and Polly Furse from Afghanistan back in the 1960s and 1970s seem not to have survived in cultivation. However, if anyone has any species *Eremurus* and would like to enter into an exchange of information and seeds with him, please contact Stewart Preston, 14 Goodall Street, Mosgiel, New Zealand.

## **Cure your Liverworts - help is at hand in the kitchen**

In BN 20: 12, Bruce Muir from Victoria, Australia asked for advice on how to treat or avoid liverworts which can be a nuisance, especially in seed pots. We do have some advice to pass on, thanks to Erich Pasche. Part of this advice started life in Holland and has reached us via Canada and Germany, and involves vinegar! Erich refers to an article by Linda Verbeek in the *Bulletin of the Alpine Club of British Columbia*, Vol. 40, no. 4. Linda writes that she had some visitors from The Netherlands who recommended that she cured her liverwort problem by the application of vinegar; she tried it, by painting it on them with a fine brush and they rapidly died. Erich read this comment and also tried it out, applying it with a paintbrush; the liverworts turned brown in two days but the treatment did not harm the seedlings of *Notholirion macrophyllum* in the pot. Also recommended by Erich is spray treatment with 'Fungoran' (0.2%), the active ingredient of which is copperoxychloride, and 'Maneb' (0.2%).

Wessel Marais also has some information on the topic: that commercial moss killers are allegedly effective against liverworts (allegedly inserted because he hasn't yet tried it, and he is a friend!). They are usually based on Iron sulphate and used on lawns or tiled roofs, but there is a note of caution; they can stain stone and concrete badly.

Many thanks for these notes, Erich and Wessel, I am sure that they will give comfort to a lot of growers having problems with this pest.

## **A new Iris described from China**

*Iris daliensis* was described in 1997\* from Yunnan's Cangshan Mountain by X.D.Dong and Y.T.Zhao. It is said to be similar to *I. collettii* but a larger plant with leaves (when mature) 50-80 cm long and 1-1.8 cm broad; the flowers are creamy with a yellow crest on the falls and have the same sort of form as those of *I. collettii*. There is a good drawing of the plant, showing that it has a compact crown surrounded by bristles of previous years' leaves; the roots are fleshy and radish-like. It has very short stems and it is the long tube to the flowers that raises them 6-8 cm tall; the flowers are quite small, about 3-4 cm across and flattish with the segments almost equal in size but the outer three (falls) have a wavy crest in the centre.

It is always difficult to assess the characteristics of irises without seeing them in the living state, but this does look very much like *I. collettii* and one wonders of it should really be regarded as a colour variant of that. *Iris collettii* is normally pale to mid lavender blue.

\*The reference is *Acta Phytotaxonomica Sinica* 35(1): 81-82 (1997).

### Labels

Chris Churchouse has sent us some examples of labels which she says are very long lasting and have room for plenty of information other than just a name. They are metal, rectangular, 5.5 cm wide and 3 cm high with a barbed stalk holding it firmly in the ground. On to these is placed the self-adhesive strip containing the typed information, printed using a DYMO 4000 machine; this strip can be stuck directly on to a pot if preferred. These are very weather-resistant and do not fade. The address of the company supplying these particular metal labels in Britain is: Alitags, Bourne Lane, Much Hadham, Herts, SG10 6ER, but there are several producing similar products. Dymo printing machines are fairly readily available on the retail market through stationery shops.

### *Fritillaria hupehensis*

Recent imports of this species from China, and requests for information, have prompted a check back to the literature to see what can be gleaned. It was described in 1977 by Hsiao & Hsia and is a tall plant, around 50 cm, with whorled leaves which have tendril-like tips. The oblong bells are quite large, 4-4.5 cm long, and conspicuously tessellated, so, on the whole, it must look very similar to *F. cirrhosa*. However, we should be seeing it around in cultivation in the West from now on, so will be able to get a better idea of its appearance.

### *Narcissus bujei* and a new V.M.H.

A recent query involving a Portuguese *Narcissus* led, indirectly, to a check on the identity of a rather unfamiliar species, *N. bujei*. Many bulb enthusiasts will not have encountered this name, since it is not, to my knowledge, in general cultivation or in any catalogues. It is, however, grown by a few specialists and covered by John Blanchard in his most useful book *Narcissus* (Alpine Garden Society, 1990).

*Narcissus bujei* has been the subject of some debate, although largely by one person; it was first described by Fernández Casas in 1982 as *N. longispathus* var. *bujei*, then transferred by him to *N. hispanicus*, as var. *bujei*, then finally given specific status, again by Fernández Casas, as *N. bujei*. It is accepted as a species in the *Flora of Western Andalusia*. This is a trumpet daffodil, wholly yellow (except for the green tube) with erect, slightly longitudinally-twisted, pale grey-green leaves (not markedly twisted and blue-green as in *N. hispanicus*), and, according to John Blanchard, the corona (trumpet) is 'noticeably less notched.' It occurs in the Serranía de Ronda on limestone formations.

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*Congratulations to John Blanchard on his award from the Royal Horticultural Society of VMH - the Victoria Medal of Honour.*



## Those "non-flowering" *Lycoris* again

Harry Hay, one of our leading 'bulbous gurus' here in the UK, does not seem to have quite the same problems as most of us when it comes to the lack of flowers on *Lycoris*. He has kindly sent the following notes on how to deal with two of the more commonly cultivated species, *L. squamigera* and *L. incarnata*: "These were both purchased from Van Tubergen in 1971 and planted in a well-prepared border of an unheated glasshouse, in full sun. Since then they have never been replanted or given any organic material, the soil must now be virtually devoid of any humus. They are watered four times per annum with tomato fertilizer (with trace elements) only when they are in leaf. They are never watered when dormant and are allowed to start into growth before watering. The bulbs are without foliage from approximately May-October, flowering naked in late July to mid August. It is ruinous to water when the flowers appear, as the stems will split and rupture due to excess turgidity. The soil in which the bulbs are growing has been frozen solid, when even the leaves have been unscathed. Incidentally, the pH is 7.1.

This year, from 23-7-97 to 27-7-97, *L. squamigera* produced 16-19 scapes. The clump contains approximately 60 bulbs. Over the years I must have given 200 bulbs away, always from the perimeter. No-one has ever reported to me success in flowering their gifts. I forewarn them that they are useless in pots but may succeed if the pot is two feet deep!

*Lycoris incarnata* had 10 scapes, and the clump consists of about 30 bulbs; similar remarks re. gifts of bulbs apply to this species.

It would seem that roughly one third of the bulbs are flowering each year.

Many thanks for these notes, Harry. We have a good number of species here, but so far have not made up a bed such as you describe and have little success at flowering them; *L. radiata* flowers occasionally, planted in a raised bed of gritty, sandy soil outside without protection all year. The main problem, apart from no flowers, is Narcissus fly which seem to prefer them to anything else.

## Return to Paris

In BN: 12, we gave a breakdown of the genera *Paris*, *Kinugasa* and *Daiswa*, together with the explanation as to why the genus *Paris* had been split into three. It seems that the work by Takhtajan in 1983 has not generally caught on, and the latest, very detailed, studies by the Chinese botanist Li Hen<sup>(6)</sup> suggest that they should be put together again; however, the three are still recognised at the level of subgenus or section, so both workers agree on the divisions, it is a matter of degree and positioning. Possibly molecular studies will throw further light on this in due course, and maybe not!

The classification proposed by Li Hen<sup>(6)</sup> [*Bulletin of Botanical Research* 6: 109-144 (1986)] is as follows:

## I. Subgenus Daiswa

### (1) Section Dunniana

1. *P. dunniana* (*P. hainanensis*)

### (2) Section Euthyra

2. *P. cronquistii*

var. *cronquistii* (*P. polyandra*)  
var. *xichouensis*

3. *P. vietnamensis*

4. *P. delavayi*

var. *delavayi* (*P. henryi*)  
var. *ovalifolia*

5. *P. polyphylla*

var. *polyphylla* (*P. debeauxii*, *P. biondii*, *P. taitungensis*, *P. kwangtungensis*)

var. *nana*

var. *chinensis* (*P. formosana*)

var. *alba*

var. *stenophylla* (*P. arisanensis*, *P. lanceolata*, *P. hamifer*)

forma *latifolia*

var. *pseudothibetica*

forma *macrosepala*

var. *yunnanensis* (*P. yunnanensis*, *P. christii*, *P. wercieri*, *P. franchetiana*,

*P. cavaleriei*, *P. gigas*, *P. pinfaensis*, *P. aprica*, *P. atrata*)

6. *P. mairei* (*P. violacea*)

### (3) Section Marmorati

7. *P. luquanensis*

8. *P. marmorata*

### (4) Section Fargesiana

9. *P. fargesii*

### (5) Section Thibetica

10. *P. thibetica*

var. *thibetica*

var. *apetala*

## II. Subgenus Paris

### (6) Section Axiparis

11. *P. axialis*

12. *P. forrestii* (*P. longistigmata*)

13. *P. vanioti*

### (7) Section Kinugasa

14. *P. japonica*

### (8) Section Paris

15. *P. verticillata* (*P. obovata*, *P. hexaphylla*, *P. manchurica*, *P. dahurica*)

16. *P. bashanensis*

17. *P. quadrifolia*

18. *P. tetraphylla*

19. *P. incompleta* (*P. apetala*, *P. octophylla*)

There have been two additions to the above list of *Paris*:

- *Paris birmanica* (*Daiswa birmanica*) which will presumably fit into subgenus *Daiswa*, section *Euthyra*
- *P. polyphylla* var. *yunnanensis* forma *velutina*, a newly described form with leaves densely hairy (velutinous) beneath, and the stamens carried in two ranks. Details of these were published in the *Edinburgh Journal of Botany* 54(3); 351-353 (1997) by Henry Noltie and Li Heng.

## Catalogues

Robin and Sue White are well-known for their excellent range of hellebores, daphnes and epimediums but they do grow quite a lot of other interesting plants, including some monocots. A short list, supplementary to the main 1997 catalogue, has just been issued and includes three aroids: the curious autumn-flowering *Arum pictum* which has rich chocolate-reddish spathes (a good foliage plant, but quite frost-tender), the rich yellow and fragrant spring-flowering *Arum creticum* (FCC form) and *Arisaema ciliatum*, a fine plant for a leafmould-rich site, producing chocolate and white spathes in summer. For a similar position, in cool, moist growing conditions is, to me, one of the loveliest of lilies, *Lilium nepalense*, but its companion in the list, *L. mackliniae*, is every bit as good. Solomon's seals and roscoeas are currently gaining in popularity and here we have *Polygonatum humile*, a stocky one which makes quite an interesting little ground cover plant, and *Roscoea cautleoides*. This last one is quite often cultivated in its yellow and (less commonly) purple forms, but the plants offered are described as white and white-striped-purple, so here again is something a little out of the ordinary. Other items of interest are *Allium thunbergii* 'Ozawa', *Rhodophiala* (*Hippeastrum*) *elwesii*, and many dicots, of course but we cannot mention those! **Blackthorn Nursery**, Kilmeston, Alresford, Hampshire, SO24 0NL, UK (no mail order - nursery open Fridays and Saturdays from 6 March to 27 June, and a special hellebore day on 7 February).

From Australia, Garry and Sue Reid have just sent in their mail order bulb list which includes quite a number of South African items, such as the yellow version of *Chasmanthe floribunda*, var. *duckittii*, *Gladiolus tristis* varieties *tristis* and *concolor* (this has proved hardy here in Surrey), *G. carneus* in two forms, *G. undulatus*, and several *Hesperantha*, *Ixia*, *Sparaxis*, *Spiloxene*, *Tritonia*, *Romulea* and *Lachenalia* spp. There are also 15 *Oxalis*, lovely plants well worth having but best tried in containers first before they are allowed out; looking at the list, these appear to be quite well behaved ones and some I haven't seen, such as *O. massoniana*, described as having soft orange flowers with lemon centres. It is refreshing to see plants which are seldom offered in

nurseries here in Britain, for example three species of *Orthrosanthus* (blue-flowered *Iridaceae*). For catalogue, send self-addressed envelope + postage to: Garry & Sue Reid, R.M.B. 6270, via Wodonga, Victoria 3691, Australia.

If anyone is in Hampshire it is certainly worth calling in at Peter Chappell's nursery 'Spinners'; although mostly trees, shrubs and perennials, with a leaning towards woodland plants (and a very good selection they are), there are some bulbs as well and my eye settled on *Narcissus nevadensis* - quite an unusual offering in catalogues - *Anthericum bovei*, *Alstroemeria presliana australis*, *Colchicum boissieri*, *Erythronium multiscapoideum* (the splendid early "Cliftonii" form which comes from the Pulga Bridge area on the Feather River, California), *E. hendersonii* and *E. oregonum leucandrum*, *Gladiolus garnieri* and *G. cardinalis*, *Lilium* 'Bellingham Hybrids' (becoming curiously scarce in gardens), *Trillium albidum*, *T. cuneatum*, *T. kurabayashii*, *T. parviflorum*, *T. sulcatum* and *T. vaseyi*. You will have to visit, though, on Tuesdays to Saturdays - no mail order. **Spinners, School Lane, Boldre, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 5QE, UK (Tel. 01590-673347)**

Ronald Mackenzie has a fine collection of snowdrops at his garden in Oxfordshire, and some of these are made available each year through a retail list which includes short descriptions and origins. There are a few species but mostly it is the superb, much sought-after garden selections which are offered, names such as 'Robin Hood', 'John Gray', 'Sibbertoft', 'Warham', 'Bertram Anderson', 'Benhall Beauty', 'Straffan' and 'Ketton' reading like an honours list. The sources, too, make historic reading: "this comes from lady Stern's garden", "found in E.B.Anderson's garden", "raised by the Giant Snowdrop Company at Hyde Lodge", "from David Shackleton's garden in Ireland" - what a story they tell, of a long-standing love affair between the British and the snowdrop! Bulbs are sent out while still in growth in mid to late March. **The Snowdrop Company, Barn Cottage, Shilton, Oxon. OX18 4AB, UK.**

We have received a preview list of goodies to come from Jānis Rukšāns in Latvia. The catalogue will be published slightly later on. As usual, there is a huge list of mostly Central Asiatic *Allium*, many of them not seen in cultivation before in Europe. To give some idea of the richness of the list, there are over 50 *Corydalis*, including such choice items as the beautiful blue *C. ornata* (violet and white forms also offered), the yellow long-spurred *C. schanginii* subsp. *ainii* and a lot of *C. solida* forms which are all likely to be attractive garden plants. *Scilla vvedenskyi* and *S. rosenii* members of the *S. siberica* group are seldom seen or available and I don't ever remember seeing *Iris* (Juno) *capnoides* on a list before. But I could go on for pages, so I will leave it

for those who wish to see the full catalogue to write to: Jānis Rukšāns, Bulb Nursery, LV-4150 Rozula, cesu apr., Latvija.

For *Nerine* enthusiasts there is an Isle of Wight nursery specialising in the "Sarniensis" cultivars, for which they have received two Gold Medals at RHS Shows in London; there was a wonderful display of them last year, in a wide range of glistening colours from white through all shades of pink, apricot, orange and red. A list can be obtained from Ken Hall, Springbank Nurseries, Newchurch, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 0JX, UK.

For those who like to grow from seed, a splendid list is issued by Andrew Osyany in Canada, bringing together the seed gatherings of several growers/collectors in eastern Europe. I haven't counted the number of entries, but there are 32 pages of close-typed names and descriptions - mainly alpines from the mountains of Europe, western and Central Asia. Just a few of the monocots which caught my eye: *Asphodeline rigidifolia*, *Colchicum desertisyriaci*, *Fritillaria macedonica*, *Gladiolus caucasicus*, *G. palustris*, *Iris reichenbachii*, *Lilium kesselringianum* - but you should see the alpines on the list! Karmic Exotix Nursery, Box 146, Shelburne, Ontario L0N 1S0, Canada.

#### Bookends

For Aroid enthusiasts there is a brand new publication published by Kew, *The Genera of Araceae* by S.J. Mayo, J. Bogner and P.C. Boyce (1997). This may sound heavy going but it is essential for those with an interest in this fascinating, if rather bizarre and quirky group of plants.

The 370 page book consist of a complete classification of the whole family at the generic level. Each genus is given a very detailed description, with chromosome counts, distribution (with maps), the number of species it comprises, ecology, etymology of the names and bibliography. Accompanying all this are over 100 whole plate drawings by Eleanor Catherine showing the habit, dissections of the floral parts, etc., and there are 94 fine colour plates. Before this taxonomic part there are introductory chapters on history, the structure of aroids in general, embryology, cytology, palynology, chemistry, ecology, pollination, seed dispersal, geography, uses, cultivation, conservation and the fossil record. At £75 it is not cheap, until you start to think about the work that has gone into it.

This and other Kew publications (there is a Scientific Publications catalogue) are obtainable from Mail Order Department, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB, UK.

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