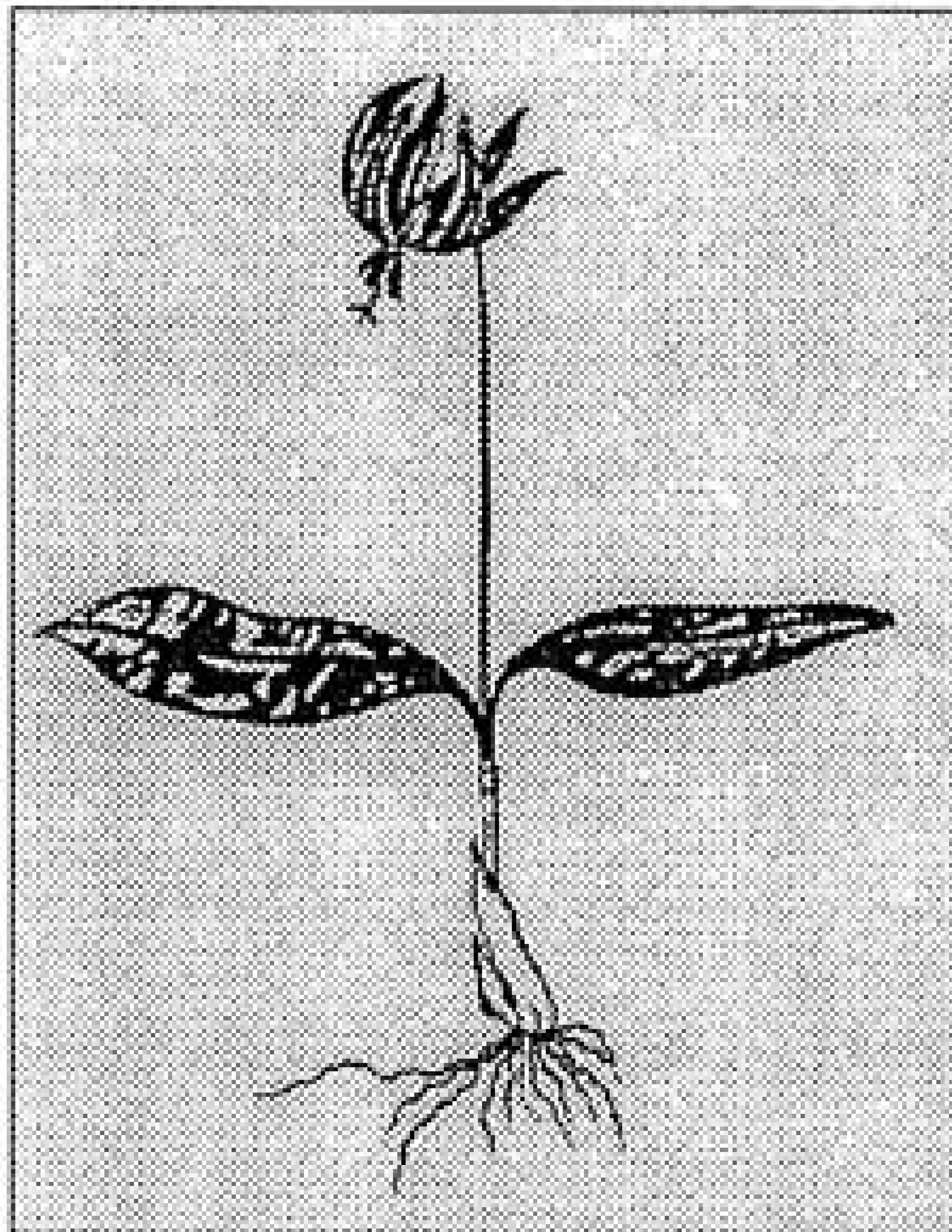


THE BULB
NEWSLETTER



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HAPPY NEW YEAR/DECADE/CENTURY/MILLENNIUM!

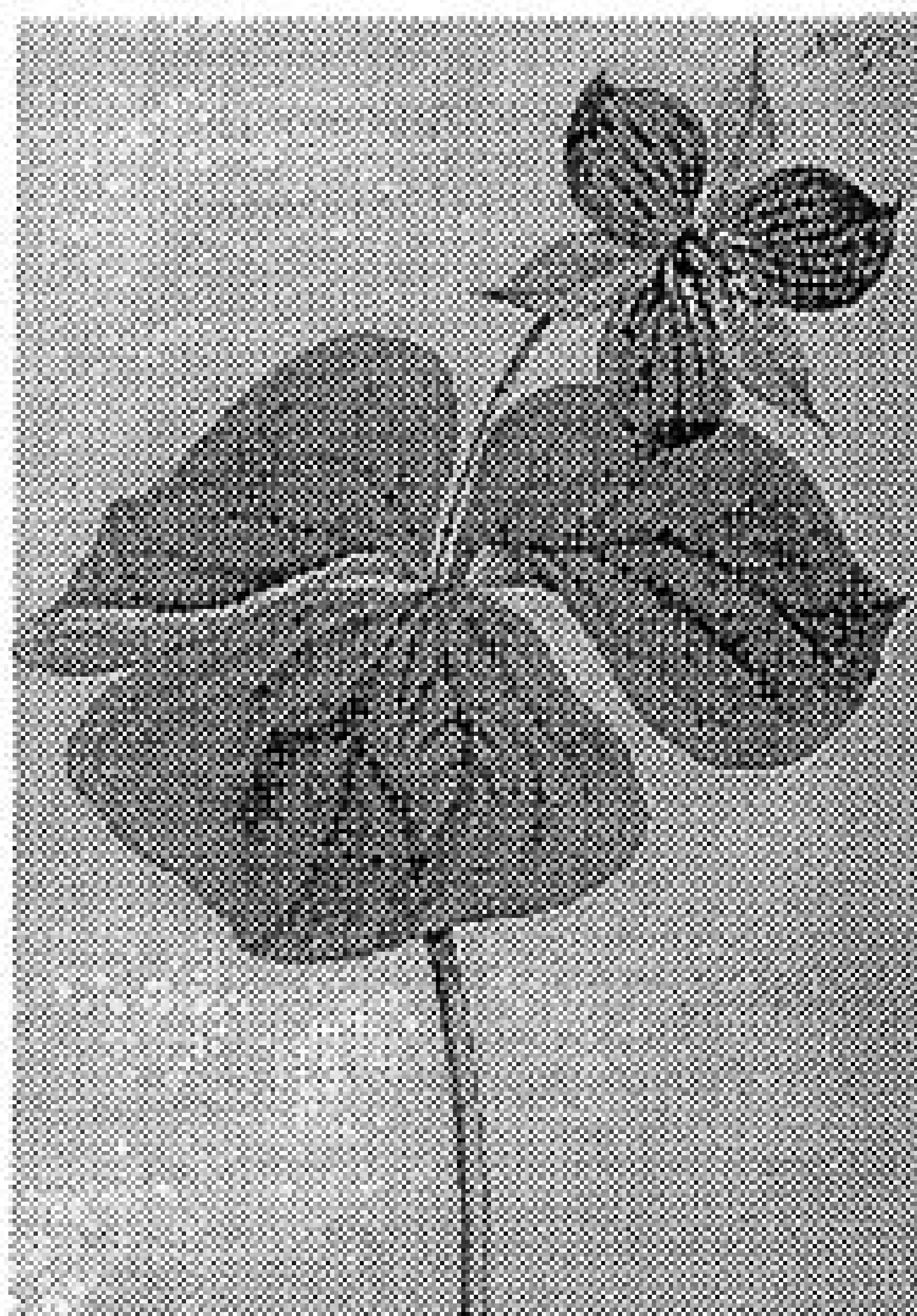
Many people will be a little tired of the new millennium by the time this newsletter appears, but we thought that it would be right and proper to acknowledge it in some small way. In view of the BN editor's involvement in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* we thought it appropriate to dig into this historic journal's past and see what was on offer in the bulb world in 1800 and 1900 and then gaze into the crystal ball to see what would be appearing in 2000 - not so remarkably clever since he is also editor of Curtis's!

Curtis's Botanical Magazine in 1800, 1900 and 2000

To celebrate the fact that this venerable journal has appeared in four different centuries - it began in the 1700s and continued in an unbroken series through the 1800s and 1900s and is now starting on the 2000s - we are taking a look through the pages of the parts that appeared at the turn of the century in each case. Although the first part of Curtis's for the new millennium has not yet been published, the BN team know exactly what will be included, and for the rest of the year, and it will not come as a great surprise to many of our subscribers when they hear that there will be a considerable number of monocots!

But first of all let us take a look back at the year 1800. There is not a great deal of choice of 'bulbs' for that particular year, but a great favourite shown here

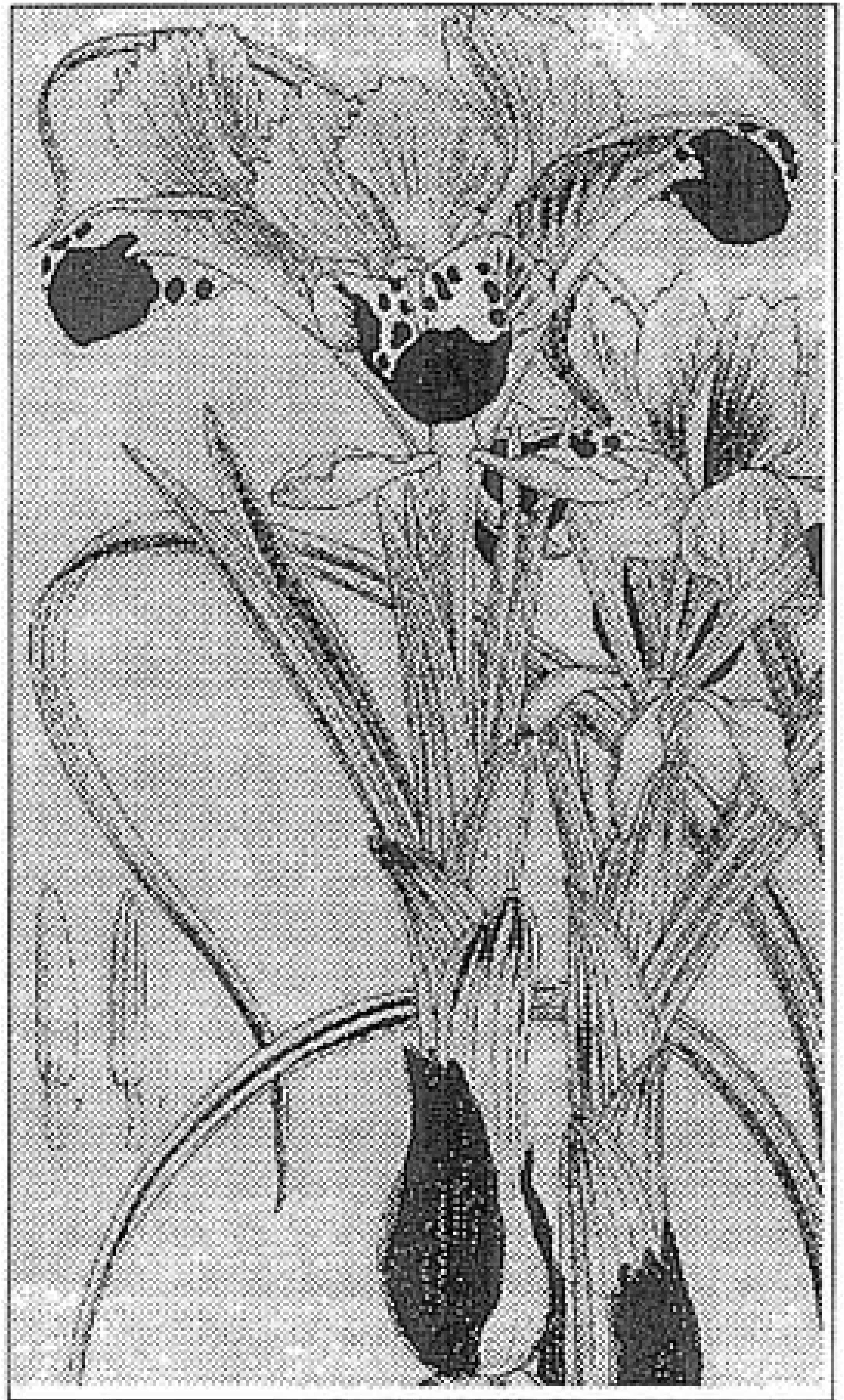
is *Trillium erectum* in its red form (Plate 470). Our old friend the golden garlic is also included, *Allium moly* (Plate 499). Perhaps 'fiend' would be more applicable in gardens where it thrives too well and takes over - ours



is not one of those, it behaves itself and we love it. Others appearing at the start of the nineteenth century were *Agapanthus umbellatus* (Plate 500), *Gladiolus lineatus* (Plate 487) and *Aletris capensis* (Plate 501). And what, you may well ask, is *Aletris capensis*? The trouble with the older parts of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* is that the modern system of nomenclature was still in its infancy - Linnaeus had been dead for only 9 years when Curtis launched his magazine - and names have changed dramatically since then for a whole range of reasons (not purely upon the whim of the meddling botanists as many of our gardening colleagues believe!). *Aletris capensis*, we find, is none other than that superb plant *Veltheimia capensis*. Another South African 'bulb' (many were painted for the magazine in its early days since the Cape flora was very popular with British horticulturists at this time of great botanical exploration in the region) was painted under the name of *Gladiolus lineatus* (Plate 487), now known as *Tritonia lineata*.

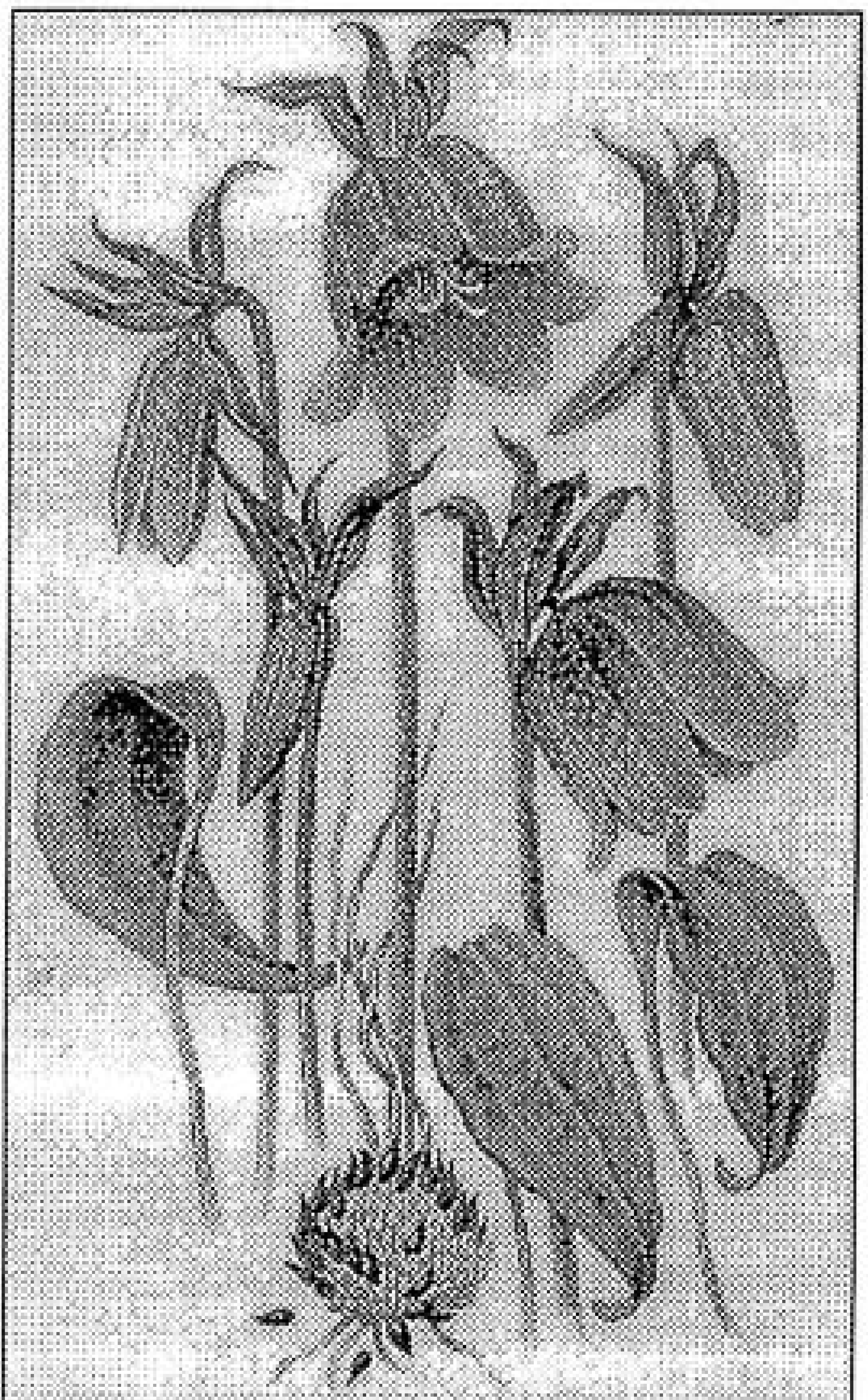
At the turn of the next century, in 1900, the *Botanical Magazine* was quite flooded with monocots, although many of them were tropical and mostly of a non-bulbous nature - there were eight tropical orchids and several tropical aroids, but the latter family included a great favourite, *Arisaema flavum* (Plate 7700). This may not be spectacular, indeed it is fairly unimpressive compared with some of the more recently introduced species, but it has charm and the yellow spathes make it rather distinctive among all the greens and browns of the majority in this fascinating genus, and it does persist well planted out in the garden.

Aroids are an acquired taste whereas irises are generally considered to be much more attractive, especially the Juno group. The Juno representative featured in the 1900 *Botanical Magazine* (Plate 7734) was *Iris stenophylla*, the small, blue-flowered relative of *I. persica* from central-southern Turkey.



The bulbs that had been used for this illustration of this were sent to Kew by Walter Siehe (see Personalities in BN22:15). Another *Iris* was painted as well, this time a Pogon, *I. obtusifolia* (Plate 7701). This may be an unfamiliar name, but the plant is not: it is better known as *I. imbricata*, a stocky yellow-flowered species from the Caucasus and northern Iran, and a first rate garden plant. *Crocus* also had a look-in, in the form of *C. alexandri* (Plate 7740), now known as *C. biflorus* ssp. *alexandri*, and a very crocus-like little amaryllid from South America, *Haylockia pusilla*. We gave a short review of this fascinating genus in BN16: 6-9 (1996); *H. pusilla* is from Uruguay, it flowers before the leaves emerge, in mid to late summer or early autumn, and comes in two colour forms, yellow and white. Another amaryllid, one of the larger hippeastrums, *H. harrisonii* appeared at the same time (Plate 7737), as did several South African 'bulbs'. There was *Agapanthus umbellatus* (Plate 7733), *Kniphofia rufa* (Plate 7706) and the Irid, *Antholyza schweinfurthii* (Plate 7709).

So, what will appear in the *Botanical Magazine* at the start of the new century? We always have a stock of several excellent paintings from which to choose; it is slightly less easy to find botanical authors for the accompanying text! For the first part of the year 2000 there will be the Chinese *Fritillaria davidii* and the newly-described yellow form of *Roscoea humeana*, the second part is devoted to Turkish plants and includes the *Oncocyclus iris I. sprengeri*, part 3 will contain six colour plates of *Fritillaria* species. Part four is still in the planning stages, but there is plenty of choice from the monocot world - for bulb enthusiasts it looks like being as good a year in the *Botanical Magazine* as it was in 1900!



Gillian Barlow's painting of *Fritillaria davidii* for *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* Vol. 17, Pt 1 (2000).

White Iris unguicularis subsp. cretensis

Many years ago, Bernard Tickner came across a solitary plant of a pure white form of the Cretan version of *Iris unguicularis* in Crete (i.e. subsp. *cretensis*). He removed a small piece from the side of the clump and brought it back home for cultivation.

Bernard tells me that he has chosen the cultivar name 'Bess Tickner' for this white-flowered plant to acknowledge the fact that his wife Bess was the person who spotted it first. We have had it growing for several years, planted out in a sand/gravel bench in an unheated glasshouse, and outside in a raised gritty bed without protection. The clumps under glass are seldom watered through the summer and they do get very warm at times, in the low to mid 30s Celsius. They usually flower quite well in winter but the plant outside is not really very successful - surviving, but only rarely producing a flower. Propagation of this, as with other members of the *I. unguicularis* group, is very simple. Plants that are dug up in early autumn, divided into small pieces and placed in slightly damp sharp sand, produce new roots very rapidly and can then be potted or planted out into their allotted sites.

***Lilium nepalense* notes**

Christine Skelmersdale, of Broadleigh Gardens, has some encouraging news for those who do not find the lovely *Lilium nepalense* an easy plant in the dryish south of England. She writes:

"We buy our *Lilium nepalense* from another grower and always leave them plunged outside in a peat plunge during the spring sales season. This year we had half a dozen or so bulbs left, which remained in the plunge throughout the summer. They went absolutely mad, romping through the peat, diving underneath the wooden dividers and coming up two or three feet away. When we harvested them last week we found 85 lovely small bulbs! All this was happening under a north wall - but they were watered very regularly throughout the summer." [see also a comment on this species on p.19].

CULTURAL HINTS REQUIRED, PLEASE

Desmond Meikle (Minehead, Somerset) has been growing the South-east Asian *Kaempferia rotunda* (Zingiberaceae) for some years, and it grows "luxuriantly and multiplies", but it never flowers.

The references we have available suggest that it needs plenty of water in the growing season and then none at all when dormant, but apart from that there seem to be no specific requirements. It is known as the 'resurrection lily' so clearly something drastic has to be done to it in the dormant season.

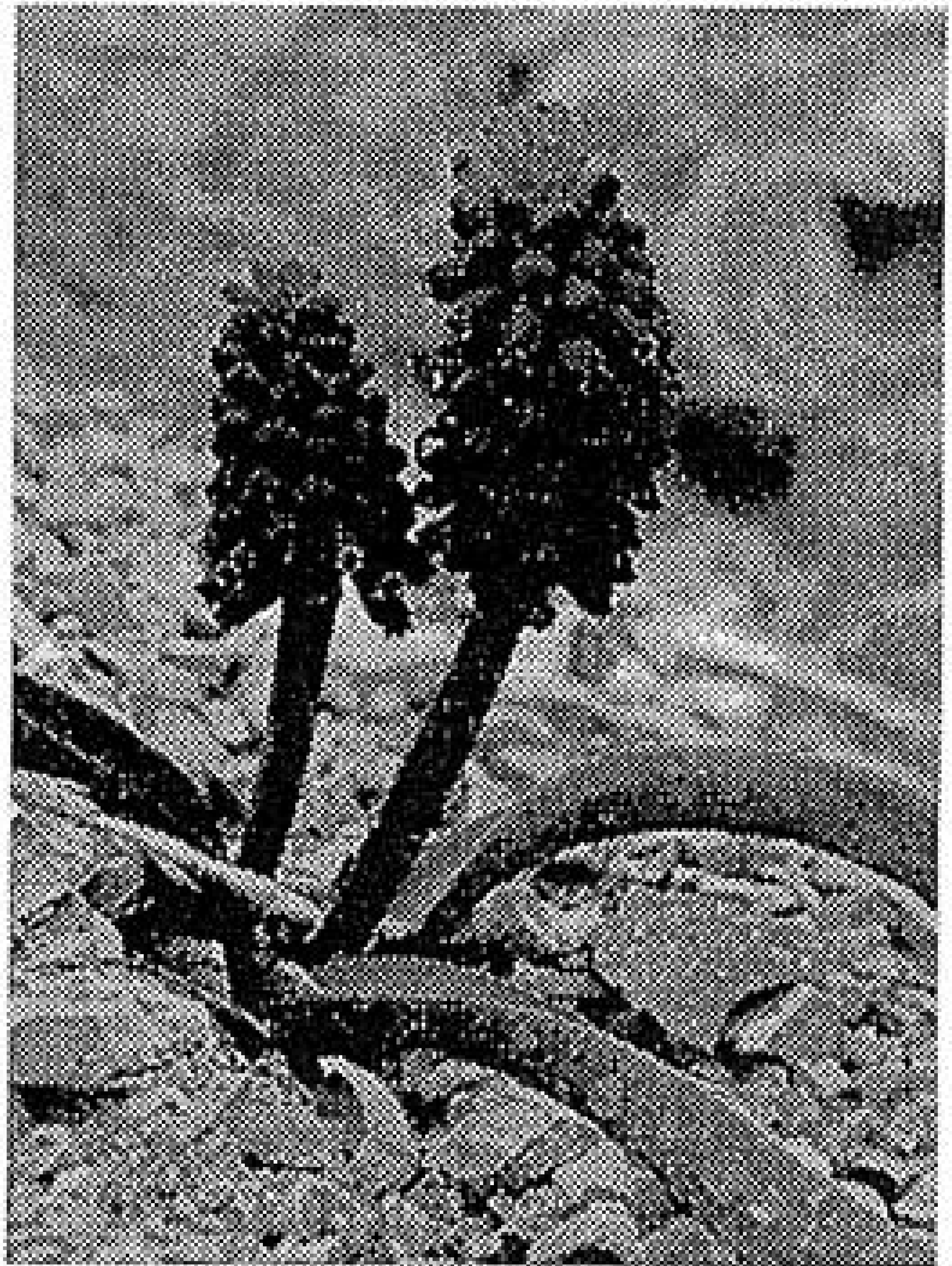
So, if BN subscribers can add any pearls of wisdom to help solve this problem we would be grateful and will pass them on to the frustrated owner.

A new species of *Muscari* from Turkey

In *The Karaca Arboretum Magazine* 5: 59-66 (1999), M.B. Güner and H. Duman have named and described *Muscari adilii*, a previously unknown species of grape hyacinth from the province of Ankara, central Turkey.

The plant was discovered in 1998 during some visits to the hills around Beypazari at around 990m growing in poor, whitish marly soils.

In its blackish-blue flowers in a dense raceme, the species looks a little like *M. latifolium* and *M. neglectum*, but the leaves are quite different from both. There are up to 4 relatively wide (0.5-1 cm wide) leaves, falcate (sickle-shaped) or coiling on the ground and rather thick and fleshy in texture (*M. latifolium* usually has just one even broader erect leaf, becoming wider towards the apex, *M. neglectum* has several (up to 6) very slender ones). The flowers are a little shorter than those of *M. latifolium* but are within the range of variation of *M. neglectum*. However, it is in fruit that the species is quite different from both of the other two, with large, winged, fleshy capsules 1-1.3 cm long and 1-1.4 cm wide; in *M. negelectum* and



Muscari adilii. Photo by A. Güner

M. latifolium the capsules are at most 9 mm long and are not thickly fleshy. In fact, these fruiting heads closely resemble those of the musk hyacinth, *Muscari muscarimi* (*M. moschatum*), but this belongs to a quite unrelated group of *Muscari* species having white or yellow flowers.

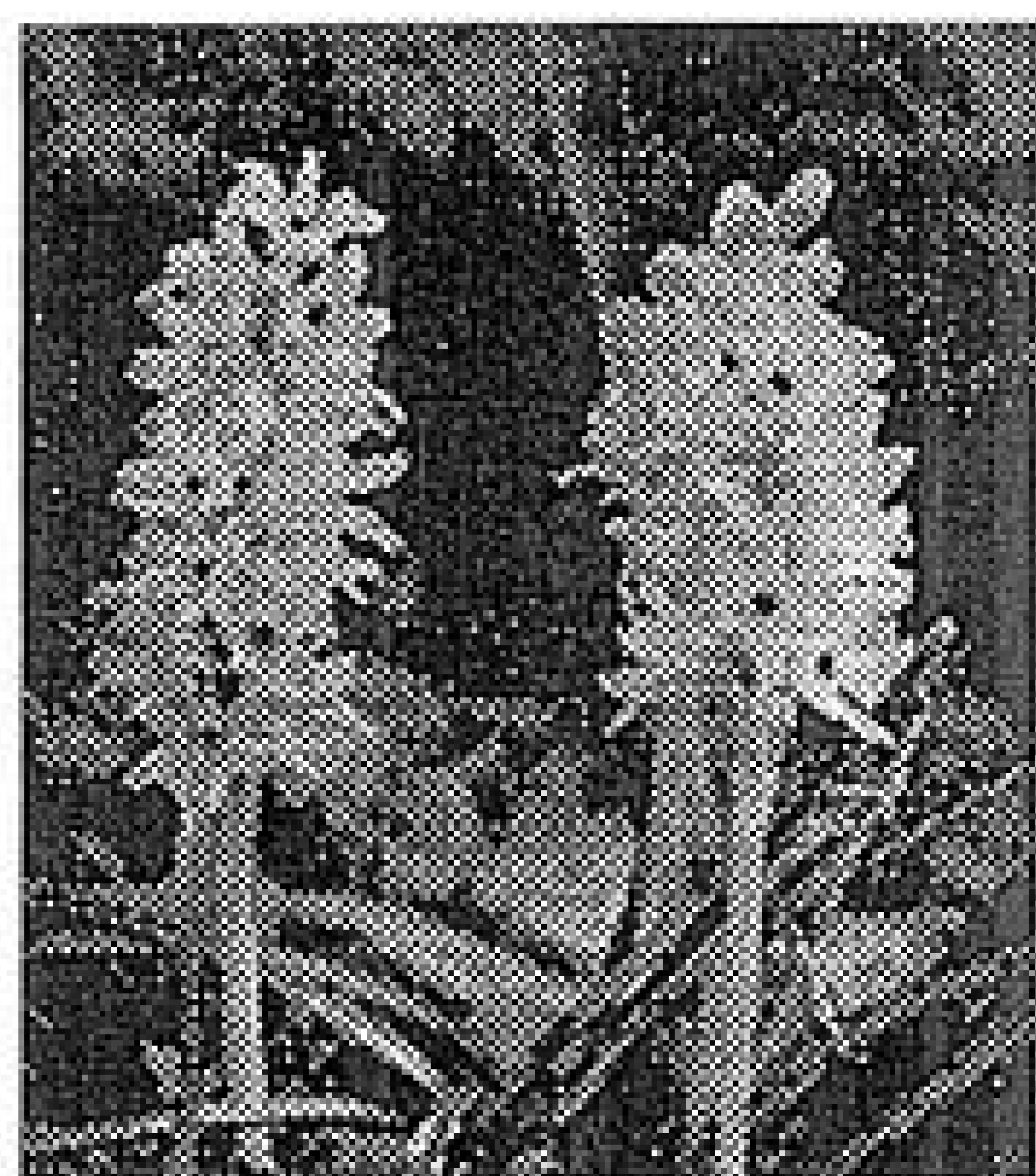
The authors describe the flowers of the new species as up to 30 in number, deep blackish blue, tubular, 3-4.5 mm long and smelling slightly of salami. The paper is accompanied by colour photographs of the plant in flower and in fruit, indicating that it is quite an attractive plant, apparently with the added bonus of an appetizing aroma!

Muscari adilii is named after Prof. Dr. Adil Güner of Abant İzzet Baysal University in Bolu, editor of the journal in which it is described, a researcher into the Turkish flora and currently engaged in the preparation of a second supplement to the *Flora of Turkey* with Prof. Neriman Özhatay of Istanbul University. He is also father of one of the authors of the paper, M.Basar Güner.

Grape Hyacinths and Squills will go on trial

From 2000 to 2003 there is to be a trial of small, hardy members of the *Hyacinthaceae* (which were included in *Liliaceae*) at the Royal Horticultural Society's garden at Wisley. It was considered that the group of bulbs related to *Scilla* and *Muscari* needed assessing and promoting for their garden value, and the best way to achieve this would be to plant up as many different ones as possible in a comparative trial.

There are several reasons for trials of this nature, one of which is to judge them for garden value and make recommendations as to which should receive the Award of Garden Merit (AGM). Secondly, it is often beneficial to have a trial in order to attempt to sort out and clarify the identities and nomenclature of plants that are around in cultivation, and particularly at the cultivar level since the situation is very often in a confused state; there is an element of this in the case of this particular trial. The third reason for this trial is to bring these interesting little bulbs to the attention of the gardening public, for they will be on show to the large numbers of visitors to Wisley.



Bellevalia hyacinthoides

When the idea was first suggested, it was loosely given the name 'trial of small blue bulbs', and indeed this is the basic concept of the trial. This was later refined to 'Hardy *Hyacinthaceae*, excluding *Ornithogalum*'. The exclusion of the latter was not because the committee had any great dislike of the genus, but its inclusion could have doubled the size of the trial and made it unwieldy; in any case, ornithogalums do not fall into the concept of 'small blue bulbs'. The genera to be included are *Scilla*, *Muscari*, *Chionodoxa*, *Bellevalia*, *Hyacinthella*, *Puschkinia*, *Brimeura*, *Hyacinthus* (excluding *H. orientalis*), *Hyacinthoides* (excluding *H. non-scripta* and *H. hispanica*), and the hybrid genus \times *Chionoscilla*. Only the smaller species (not more than 30 cm in height when in flower) are to be grown and so, for example, the tall *Scilla hyacinthoides* will not qualify. As well as the species of these genera, the trial will hopefully include some of their variations, whether named botanical variants or selected cultivars, such as colour forms.

The trial will be planted in autumn 2000, and entries are now being sought by the Trials Department at Wisley. If anyone wishes to contribute bulbs to the trial they should in the first instance write to the Trials Dept, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB, asking for further details and a list of genera and species. However, the bulbs will not be required until late summer 2000, for planting in early autumn.

*****Galanthus Gala 2000*****

Not only do *Galanthus* fanciers have a new book to fuel their interest, *The Genus Galanthus* by Aaron Davis (See BN 28: 14), there is a snowdrop event for them to look forward to: "The Galanthus Gala".

This, the fourth annual snowdrop-lovers Gala, will take place on February 19th 2000, starting with a morning of lectures at Larkmead School, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, by notables of the the snowdrop world. The topics will include propagation by 'twin-scaling', finding snowdrops in the wild and what to grow them with in the garden.

There is the ever-popular plant sale, with some of the leading UK Snowdrop nurseries, and a garden outing to nearby Kingston Bagpuise House. This will be opening specially for the Gala and has large areas of naturalised snowdrops, including green-tipped doubles - this is where *Galanthus* 'Kingston Double' was found.

For further details (programme and application form), send a self-addressed and stamped envelope to: Daphne Chappell, Cinderdine Cottage, Dymock, Gloucestershire GL18 2DG, UK. Tel: 01531-890265. email:daphne@cinderdine.clara.co.uk

And a newly described Galanthus

From Armenia, in the district of Zangezur, a snowdrop has just been named as *Galanthus artjuschenkoae* after the great Russian botanist and specialist in the *Galanthus* and other members of the *Amaryllidaceae*, Zinaida T.Artiushenko.

The author is Eleonora Gabrielian, and the place of publication *Flora, Vegetation and Plant Resources of Armenia* 12: 13-14 (1999).

It is probably best to quote the English abstract, for this gives the purported differences between it and *G. transcausicus*, the most closely related species:

'From its related *G. transcausicus* [it] is distinguished by larger subglobose bulbs; [leaves] elongate-lanceolate in the middle or upper third widened, declinate, light green, dull; by the shape and size of all the perianth segments, number of longitudinal green stripes and the shape of the green patch around sinus of the inner ones; globose capsule and shape of ariloid [i.e. the fleshy

ANOTHER DATE FOR THE DIARY

"The Spring Thing"

'A few snowdrops' are just a small part of the enticement to visit Monksilver Nursery's 'Spring Thing' event in 2000. To be held on 18 March, this is a plant sale with other nurseries taking part - not just any old nurseries but selected ones, chosen for their range of interesting plants. Although the sale is not essentially 'bulbous' in character, it will include 'many bulbs' plus *Trillium* and *Corydalis* as well as some tempting dicots such as *Hepatica*, *Helleborus*, *Pulmonaria*, *Paeonia*, wood anemones, Monksilver's collection of *Ranunculus ficaria* variants, grasses.....

For further information contact:

Joe Sharman, Monksilver Nursery, Oakington Rd., Cottenham, Cambridge CB4 8TW.

Tel:01954-251555; Fax: 01223-502887
e-mail plants@monksilver.com

appendage attached to the seed].'

In Aaron Davis's book there is a lengthy discussion about *G. transcaucasicus* and another plant that he included as a synonym of it, *G. nivalis* var. *caspius* of Ruprecht (1868). It appears that Gabrielian regards the latter as being distinct from *G. transcaucasicus* and has described it as this new and separate species.

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Henning Christiansen from Malveira, Portugal, has sent some of his hints on labelling, involving the use of DYMO tapes:

"Looking through older numbers of The Bulb Newsletter I came across Chris Churchhouse's information about using DYMO printing for labelling of plants. As I have used DYMO-labelling for quite a number of years, I thought I should inform you about my own experiences:

1. To fix the DYMO tape I use plastic labels, but it is important that they are UV-resistant. Also, it is an advantage to use labels which are brilliant on one side (where to fix the tape) and faint on the other side to be able to write some extra information with a pencil.

2. To make it easier to distinguish the different plant families I am using a colour system, as you can get the DYMO tapes in different colours. As I am specially interested in bulbs, my colour codes are as follows:

RED - Amaryllidaceae

BLUE - Iridaceae

GREEN - Liliaceae (sensu lato)

ORANGE - Orchidaceae

BLACK - other families

Today the DYMO-colours are light resistant, but be sure that the green ones are made with heliogen-green pigment and not with a mixture of heliogen-blue + a yellow pigment, as this mixture can change to blue when exposed to light.

RHS Awards to Bulbs in 1998

The inclusion of a list in the January BN last year of all those bulbous plants that received awards from the RHS during the course of the previous year seems to have been appreciated, so we will try to make this an annual column. It does help to highlight those bulbs that are considered, by a very estimable committee, to be plants of excellence. Just as a reminder, for those who are not familiar with the concept:

The Royal Horticultural Society's system of awards serves a variety of purposes, but particularly as a means of encouraging people to bring

good plants to the notice of the gardening public. The hardy or near-hardy bulbs are assessed by the Joint Rock Garden Plant Committee, which has with representatives from the RHS, Alpine Garden Society and Scottish Rock Garden Club. The 'bulbous' plants (excluding orchids) honoured during 1999 were:

***Galanthus plicatus* 'Florence Baker'** - PC [Dr R. Mackenzie]. A robust snowdrop with broad (to nearly 3 cm wide) grey-green leaves, strongly plicate (folded downwards) at the margins in the lower part of the leaf. Flower stems nearly 20 cm; pedicels 3.5 cm. Flowers fragrant, about 2.5 cm long, the outer segments opening out to the horizontal, the inner petals flaring outwards at the tips, 1.2 cm with a dark green V-shaped mark at the apex.

***Galanthus* 'Bill Bishop'** - AM [Dr. R. Mackenzie]. Grey-green leaves which have a distinct fold along at least one of the margins, width about 1-1.5 cm. Flowers nearly 4 cm long with very convex outer segments which open out to the horizontal; the inner segments have a very bold green V-shaped apical mark which cuts off abruptly, not extending down (or up, depending upon how you view it in a dangling flower!) the segment. From those few notes it sounds like many others but I can assure you that it is a very fine snowdrop!

Crocus gargaricus* subsp. *herbertii - AM [Dr C. Jones]. Although this little bright orange-yellow spring crocus has been around in cultivation for a long time it is only in the last decade or so that its true worth as a garden plant has been appreciated; given the right conditions - not too hot and dry - it is capable of forming good patches because of its stoloniferous habit.

Crocus gargaricus* subsp. *gargaricus - AM [Mr A. M. Edwards]. Subspecies *gargaricus* does not produce stolons and is really not such an easy plant to cultivate successfully as its relative above. Nevertheless it is a delightful plant with possibly even brighter orange flowers; it requires a situation that dries out more in summer, so it is really better treated as an alpine house or bulb frame plant in Britain.

***Crocus chrysanthus* 'Sunspot'** - PC [Potterton & Martin]. With all the many variants of *C. chrysanthus* that there are around one would think that all the worthwhile possible combinations had been produced; however, this one is certainly very striking. It has good-sized deep yellow flowers with a large, contrasting black stigma in the centre - hence the rather apt choice of name. The origin of it is not known, but I have seen similar plants in some of the amazing mixed-colour populations of *biflorus/chrysanthus* in central-southern Turkey.

Corydalis malkensis - AM [Dr C. Grey-Wilson]. This is undoubtedly among the best of all the small tuberous *Corydalis*, often grown erroneously as *C. caucasica* 'Alba'. The most obvious feature of the white flowers is the broad lower lip of the corolla, so much more obvious than in most of these fascinating plants and giving the flowers much greater substance and impact. It is also a very easy garden plant, usually seeding itself freely and not taking very long to reach flowering size. The foliage is nicely dissected and grey-green

Crocus pelistericus x scardicus - PC [Mr E. G. Webster]. This inter-specific cross will take the name *C. x gotoburgensis* indicating its origin from that great centre of bulb cultivation, Göteborg Botanic Garden; the name will embrace all hybrids between those two species, even if (as they are) variable. The plant on show had yellow-orange flowers tinged violet at the base and shading to bronze at the tips. Like its parents it needs plenty of moisture throughout the year.

Scilla bifolia 'Norman Stevens' - PC [Mr. N. Stevens]. Norman Stevens introduced this 'double' form some years ago from southern Turkey and it has settled in to cultivation well. Although the individual flowers, with up to 12 segments and some of them not properly formed, lack the clean simplicity of the 'normal' forms, overall it makes quite a show. The colour is a strong violet blue.

Galanthus plicatus 'Augustus' - PC [Dr C. Grey-Wilson]. Snowdrops do not come any 'fatter' than this one! It has extremely broad greyish-green leaves up to 4 cm wide, somewhat pleated near the margins. In fact they are so bold and conspicuous that they make the flowers look rather small, although these are not by any means insubstantial at about 3 cm long; the apical mark on the inner segments is X-shaped.

Fritillaria eduardii - PC [Dr C. Grey-Wilson]. A pleasing variation on the Crown Imperial theme with rather paler orange flowers and segments flaring outwards rather than remaining in a bell-shape. Possibly never attaining quite the stature of *F. imperialis*; that exhibited was about 45 cm.

Tulipa kurdica - PC [Miss R. A. Cox]. An attractive and relatively easily cultivated dwarf tulip from Iraq having brick red flowers with a blackish central blotch and equally dark anthers with yellow pollen; the tips of the perianth segments are very pointed. The leaves are greyish-green and up to 5 in number, the lowest more or less at ground level and wider than the rest further up the stem, but the whole plant less than 10 cm tall including the flower.

Tecophilaea cyanocrocus var. violacea - AM [Mr F. F. Hunt]. The brilliant blue form of this amazing plant is perhaps one of the most famous of all bulbous plants, but the violet-blue form does not have quite the same appeal. Nevertheless, it is still extraordinary and certainly impressed the Committee enough, for the decision to give it an AM was unanimous.

Erythronium oregonum - PC [Regius Keeper, RBG Edinburgh]. This is one of the finest of the white-flowered erythroniums from Western North America, a very vigorous grower with good mottled foliage and tall stems. Although quite variable, particularly in the brown zig-zag markings in the centre of the otherwise white flower, the Committee have in this case given the award to the whole species, not one particular selection of it. In this case I think that the decision is fully justified since I have never seen a bad one!

Scilla melaina - PC [Regius Keeper, RBG Edinburgh]. This is one which is not seen very often in cultivation, a southern Turkish species that can be compared in appearance with *S. cilicica* and *S. hohenackeri*. It has up to 5 narrow, strap-shaped leaves and loose racemes of bright, dark blue flowers that have spreading to slightly reflexed segments. There are only a few (up to 5) flowers per stem but usually more than one stem per bulb, about 15-25 cm in height.

Iris graeberiana 'Yellow fall' - AM [Dr C. Lafong]. Out of the numerous, spectacular, and mostly very tricky Juno irises, this is one of the easier species to cultivate. It has been in cultivation for a long time now, originally in a form without any yellow coloration on the ridge in the centre of the falls - whereas this particular clone has, so it is worth giving it a distinguishing name.

Fritillaria grandiflora - PC [Mr J. I. & Mrs M. Young]. Like a large-flowered version of *F. kotschyana*, this is sometimes treated as a subspecies of it. It is well named, for in the wild, in the Talysh mountains of Transcaucasia, it is reputed to be capable of having bells up to 5 cm in length and stems to 50 cm! Like all members of this group they vary in the amount of green and brown-purple tessellation.

Narcissus x cazorlanus - PC [Mr J. I. & Mrs M. Young]. Although one should not be surprised by anything in the genus *Narcissus*, hybrids between the species of the *N. bulbocodium* group (subgenus *Corbularia*, or section *Bulbocodium*) and those of other groups are not common. However, crosses do occur, especially with *N. triandrus* (section *Ganymedes*), and this one is a *N. hedraeanthus* x *N. triandrus* cross and no doubt delightful (I have not seen it), as they all are.

Allium bolanderi - PC [Mr T. Rymer]. Some of the Western North American alliums are really very attractive plants so it is good to see one now again come up for an award. One failing is that they tend to have foliage that is dead by flowering time, and *A. bolanderi* one complies with this generalization - but this is an occupational hazard of being an onion. Nevertheless, it is an interesting plant, about 15 cm tall with umbels of pale purple-pink flowers, the outer segments tipped with darker purple and the inner ones with toothed margins.

Roscoea ganeshensis - PC [Director, RBG Kew]. Roscoeas are becoming increasingly popular and quite rightly so, for they are fine summer-flowering monocots, on the whole easy to cultivate and hardy. All the renewed activity in plant introduction from China is partly the reason for the interest, but this one is not from there - it is from central Nepal. It is a 'chunky' plant with broad, overlapping wavy-margined leaves. The flowers are produced freely in a bunch, purple with a darker central patch and a paler upper segment. It is named after the Ganesh Himal.

Crocus mathewii - PC [Mr A. A. Edwards]. Well, what can I say but that this is a very justified award! Alan Edwards's exhibited pot of this Turkish autumn-flowering crocus was of one of the better forms, white with a deep violet throat. However, it does vary quite a lot and can be pale lilac or white without a dark eye in the centre. For this reason it was suggested that this dark-eyed form should be given a distinguishing clonal name since it will be the one that most people would expect to get if they ask for *C. mathewii*.

Crocus caspius - AM [Mr A. A. Edwards]. Of the autumn-flowering crocuses this is one of the most attractive, either white or soft lilac with a rich yellow throat - a colour range that is rather reminiscent of *C. niveus*. It is the most easterly-occurring autumnal species, in the low altitude woods and grasslands of the Caspian coast; the exhibited plants were derived from collections made by Paul Furse in Iran over 20 years ago.

Cyclamen graecum subsp. anatolicum - PC [Dr & Mrs R. B. Wallis]. It is a difficult problem, giving awards to *Cyclamen* since they are nearly all excellent plants, they are immensely variable but, at the same time, they are practically impossible to propagate vegetatively so the question of producing named, unvarying clones does not arise. However, if one has a system of awards at all then *Cyclamen* should certainly get them. This is the Turkish variant of the widespread *C. graecum*, distinguished by having poorly developed 'auricles' around the mouth of the corolla, and with a very conspicuous red-purple 'nose' which tends not to extend back along the petal. In the case of the exhibited plant, the main body of the flower was pale purple, but it can vary from white to deep pinkish-purple.

Arum pictum - PC [Mr R. Drew]. This is the autumn-flowering species from the Balearic Islands, nothing to do with the creamy-veined variant of *A. italicum* known as 'Pictum' or 'Marmoratum'. It was actually exhibited and given the award as a foliage plant, which is just as well for the Committee since its purple spathes give forth a most disgusting smell at certain times. The leaves are very thick in texture, lustrous deep green with a contrasting pattern of pale veins - really very attractive and a worthwhile plant for the alpine house or frame since the foliage stays fresh through the winter; outdoors, however, it succumbs very readily to sharp frosts in my experience.

Crocus banaticus (White-flowered) - PC [Mr L. A. J. Martin]. A very choice autumn-flowering crocus, showing all the characteristics of the species (outer perianth segments opening out horizontally and much larger than the erect inner ones, and a very much divided style) but with the flowers pure white flowers throughout. I find it not as vigorous as the 'ordinary' purple form, which seeds itself around in the peat bed. The white form needs a distinguishing name since 'Albus' is not acceptable under the code of nomenclature.

Cyclamen hederifolium Silver Cloud Group - PC [Dr C. Grey-Wilson]. This is a name that encompasses plants in which the leaf is coloured a uniform silver. Fortunately seedlings usually come over 90% true to type, allowing for a little variation. The flowers are pink, as in typical *C. hederifolium* (the white-flowered equivalent is White Cloud).

Cyclamen graecum subsp. *mindleri* - AM [Mr T. D. Wiltshire]. This is the western Cretan variant of *C. graecum*, in itself very variable but they tend to have particularly attractive dark leaves and usually with white or very pale flowers heavily stained deep red-purple around the mouth.

Two new Colchicaceae from Armenia

Nora Gabrielian has just described [in *Flora, Vegetation and Plant Resources of Armenia* 12: 15-17 (1999)] two new species in the *Colchicaceae* (*Liliaceae sens. lat.*), one *Merendera* (regarded by some authorities to be part of *Colchicum*) and one *Colchicum*.

Merendera greuteri, presumably named after Werner Greuter of Berlin Botanic Garden, is a small, spring-flowering species that occurs on Mt Arteni in the Shirak district of Armenia; it grows at 1500-1900 m, flowering in April-May. In overall appearance it is similar to the much better-known *M. trigyna*; it has three narrowly lanceolate leaves only 2.5-4 cm long and 3-6 mm wide at flowering time (but expanding later of course) and small white (rarely pale pink) flowers in which the expanded part of the segments is about 2-3 cm long; as in all merenderas the

segments, although they appear to form a tube, are not actually joined together at the base. The flower is the usual goblet shape, but it is noted that the segments are often twisted lengthways; the anthers are yellow. It has the usual type of corm for a member of the *Colchicum* group it has a very long neck, up to 6 cm, and the dark brown tunics are very persistent, remaining and forming layers for as many as nine years. This brings the number of merenderas in Armenia to six: *M. sobolifera*, *M. trigyna*, *M. raddeana*, *M. mirzoevae*, *M. candidissima* and the new *M. greuteri*.

Colchicum goharae is the other new species, regarded as a 'peculiar and isolated species' - isolated in the sense of being unrelated to others. It is from northern Armenia in the region of Ijevan on Mt Aghaisar where it grows at 1100-1700 m, flowering in April, May and June. The leaves (three per corm) are 'more or less synanthous' (i.e. produced with the flowers) and are described as being tough, dark green and with a distinct central vein, 16-30 cm long and 0.8-2.5 cm wide (presumably expanding to these dimensions after flowering). The 1-3 flowers are white and 'starry' with elliptical or obovate (wider towards the tips) segments 20-25 mm long and 7-9 mm wide, and the anthers blackish. It is named after Gohar Oganeseva, explorer of the Armenian flora. With such large leaves and small flowers this does sound rather unusual. There is the possibility that the leaves are those left over from the previous season, as happens in some of the Balkan species such as *C. macedonicum* (see BN 25:18).

Personalities in the Bulb world - 12. Francis Masson



Francis Masson (1741-1805)

The name of Francis Masson is very familiar to gardeners and botanists in South Africa, and increasingly so among growers in the Northern Hemisphere with the current and developing popularity of Cape bulbs. *Massonia* species are now finding their way into alpine houses and bulb frames, and his surname is also attached as a specific epithet to considerably more plants - not just bulbs - from South Africa.

Masson was of Scottish origin, born in Aberdeen, who came south to become a gardener at Kew Gardens. Clearly he impressed those in high places, for the then Director, Sir Joseph Banks, sent him to South Africa as Kew Garden's first official

Those interested in South African bulbs will be pleased to hear that a booklet - *Grow Bulbs* - by Graham Duncan of the Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden is just about to be released. It will have 80 colour photos, and some drawings by Jeanette Loedolff. More details, when we have seen a copy, in the next BN.

plant hunter, travelling there in 1772 with Captain Cook who was setting out on his second voyage around the world. For this commission, Masson received a salary of £100 a year, payable on his return, and £200 a year for expenses while on the trip. He was in South Africa until 1775, undertaking several major botanical expeditions and collecting large numbers of new plants. On one of these he joined forces with Carl Peter Thunberg whose name will also be very familiar to gardeners through the number of '*thunbergiis*' that there are [Thunberg made an enormous contribution to the knowledge of the South African flora and published a *Flora Capensis*, the first attempt at cataloguing and describing the amazing Cape flora]. Masson did not have an easy time as travelling in those early days was fraught with difficulties and on one occasion he was hunted by a group of convicts, hoping to take him hostage. Near-drowning in floods, sometimes on the brink of starvation and at risk from the large numbers of wild animals were all part of being a plant hunter for Kew at that time! Many bulbous plants were encountered and I enjoy reading some of the accounts of their discovery, for example:

22 September 1773. Travelled over deep sandy dry country with great fatigue & towards evening arrived at Saldanha Bay, crossed in a boat.....found a great variety of curious plants & in particular, a large bulbous root growing in dry precipices which the Dutch call vergift-boll, poison bulb; the juice of which, they say, the Hottentots use as an ingredient to poison their arrows. We found it to be a species of *Amaryllis*, & by the leaves growing in a fan shape, we called it *Amaryllis disticha*.

One of the stories that is told frequently is of the discovery by Masson of the natural home of *Nerine sarniensis* - on Table Mountain, not the Channel Island of Guernsey as its name suggests. However, although this was important information, it is clear that someone had already collected bulbs before or they could not have been [allegedly] shipwrecked in Guernsey. It appears that Masson was very successful in introducing plants into cultivation, in spite of the long journeys involved for packages to reach England, for he is attributed with adding about 500 species to the collections at Kew. Sir Joseph Banks was delighted with the results and wrote to King George III that "His Majesty's appointment of Mr Masson is to be accounted among the few Royal bounties which have not been in any degree misapplied."

After returning to England from this expedition to South Africa, Masson then visited the Azores, the Canary Islands and the West Indies, followed by another trip to the Cape in 1786. On this second visit, Joseph Banks tried to impose restrictions on Masson's travels, insisting that expensive long journeys were less productive than concentrated work in just a few nearer sites. Fortunately Masson did not obey and some more interesting plants were discovered; he is credited with species of *Sparaxis*, *Lachenalia* and *Eucomis* on this second visit. Masson's plant hunting career ended in Canada where he died in 1805.

The Inevitable New Allium

Discoveries of new [and mostly horticulturally rather unexciting] alliums continue unabated but we feel it right to report on them briefly - there are lots of enthusiasts out there!

This issue's report covers two new species and a new variety, all from Armenia: *A. schchiana*, *A. struzlianum* and *A. leucanthum* var. *tridentatum*. These are described in a paper by M. Oganessian in *Flora, Vegetation and Plant Resources of Armenia* 12: 15-17 (1999).

Allium schchiana belongs to section *Codonoprasum* to which familiar species such as *A. flavum* and *A. carinatum* subsp. *pulchellum* belong, and it has the same overall appearance, with dangling flowers on long pedicels. It is unusual (possibly unique) in this section in having fibrous, reticulate (netted) bulb tunics. The stem is about 40 cm in height with one slender leaf and there are about 50-60 flowers in the umbel, cream coloured and each about 4 mm long on a thin pedicel up to 4.5 cm long. It is from the Vedy district.

Allium struzlianum is in the subgenus *Melanocrommyum* to which most of the really attractive garden plants belong - *A. karataviense*, *A. akaka*, *A. rosenbachianum*, etc. These have their leaves all clustered at the base and a bare flower stem, usually with very dense umbels. This one conforms to these generalizations and is 30-60 cm in height with up to 6 glaucous basal leaves about 1-2 cm wide. The umbel is (from the drawing) very tight and densely flowered, 4-6 cm in diameter with rosy-lilac flowers. The type locality is in Achurian district.

Allium leucanthum belongs to section *Allium*, the group containing *A. ampeloprasum* and its derivative the garden leek and *A. sativum*, garlic. In fact, *A. leucanthum* is not unlike *A. ampeloprasum*, a tall species with leaves scattered up the stem and a sizeable dense umbel of whitish flowers. The point (well 3, really!) about section *Allium* is that the filaments of the inner three stamens carry two extra hair-like appendages as well as the anther-bearing one in the centre, hence there are three teeth or points to each filament; the new variety, *tridentatum*, has them on the outer stamens as well as the inner. It won't set the garden world alight, but botanically interesting. From Kotaik district in south Armenia.

Thanks to Diana Chapman for sending us this comment from Reginald Farrer: "The shameful truth must now come out. I am utterly afraid of bulbs. With ordinary plants I have no qualms, for they have no wish to disappear underground and keep you in the dark. The moment the plant feels poorly you can note its symptoms, and diagnose the disease.....But how underhand and secretive a thing is a bulb! Your priceless.....blooms in glory; two months later there is nothing of them above ground, perhaps, and you have not an idea what dreadful thing may not be going on under the surface.....I maintain there is something ominous and terrible about bulbs." [*My Rock Garden*, 1907]

More than the usual complement again

In the last Newsletter (BN28: 7), and several times before, we have included notes on monocots that have had their flower parts in something other than multiples of 3. Pat Davies has now written in to alert us to what she says is a consistent freak - *Nectaroscordum siculum*, whose first flower always has 8 segments. Now it remains to be seen if everybody else's shows this peculiarity (in which case it won't be peculiar!), or is this a behavioural problem concerning the ones that Pat has in her garden? Please check your nectaroscordums!

Who was Hannon?

Peter Maynard telephoned one day to enquire if we knew what *Hannonia* was and who it was named after. The first part we could answer - it is an Amaryllid from North Africa - but part 2 showed up a certain lack of historical/classical knowledge. However, hunting down the answer to such problems is enlightening, and we came up with the following:

Hanno was a Carthaginian navigator who undertook a voyage of exploration and colonization from North Africa around the west coast of Africa in the Fifth Century BC; he was probably the first explorer to do so. His 'task force' is said to have consisted of 60 boats and 30,000 men and women, so this was not a minor operation. He is reputed to have founded Thymiaterion (now Kenitra in Morocco) and Acra (Agadir), built a temple at Cape Meddouza and reached as far as what are now Gambia and Sierra Leone, possibly even to Cameroon. Importantly, there is an account of his journeys written in the temple of Baal, and a Greek translation known as the "Periplus of Hannon".

The genus *Hannonia*, was named after him in 1931 and consists of one species, *H. hesperidium*. It is like a small *Pancratium* and also quite similar to *Vagararia*, having a small umbel of (usually 2) white flowers which have a green stripe along the centre of each perianth segment. There is no obvious 'corona' in the centre as there is in *Pancratium* and the flowers are only about 2-3 cm across. It grows at fairly low altitudes in western Morocco, flowering in September and October.

A Hardy Ginger? Last autumn Don Armstrong of Vancouver sent some photographs of a member of the Zingiberaceae for identification. He had planted one of the plants in a garden 500 metres up on Grouse Mountain, although plants in his own, lower, garden fared rather better. It has leafy, non-flowering stems like hedychiums, about a metre high, and at the base of these, at ground level, heads of striking white flowers. Jill Cowley at Kew has identified it as *Zingiber mioga* from China and Japan, although from low altitudes and from southerly latitudes. We can find no reference to it being hardy, but maybe no-one has tried it outside before.

Suggestions please

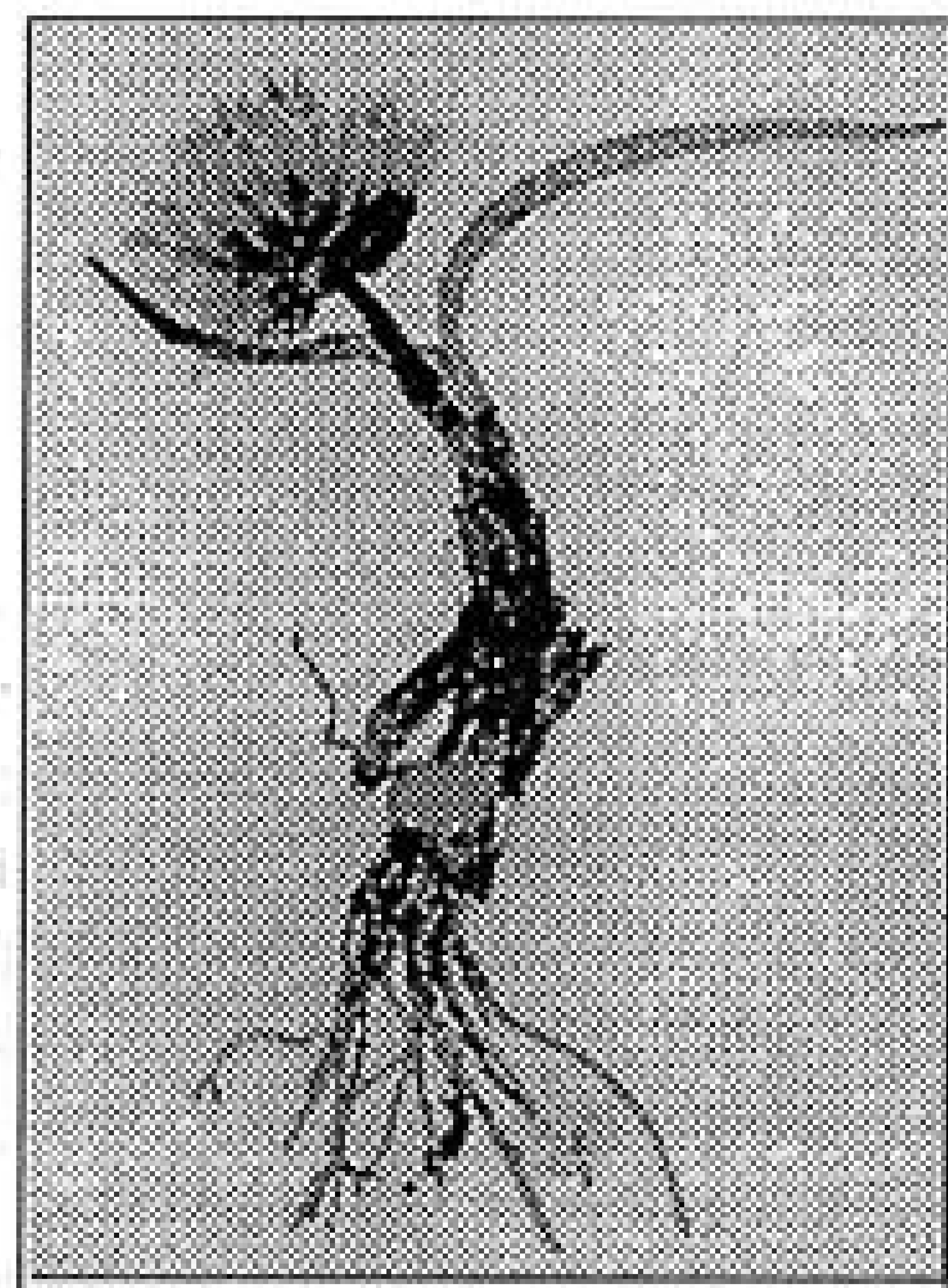
Richard Hancock has a bluebell problem - but of the Spanish variety. He writes: " I have appreciated your articles (by Brian Halliwell - BN 26:4) on 'Bulbs to Avoid' - the only failure is advice on how to eradicate them! 25 years ago I bought my present house - along with a large number of *Hyacinthoides hispanica*. Over 2½ decades of warfare I have destroyed many thousands of the d----- things and have more than when I started. Help! Any ideas will be more than gratefully received - except for digging them out, which I have more than demonstrably failed to do."

The BN office is happy to receive your comments as I am sure there are plenty of others who would like to know the secret - if there is one. Take care, though, if your problem involves English bluebells; conservationists will get upset if you start exterminating those!

A Chive of Great Merit

Whilst checking some photographs some time ago for John Ingham, taken when he was in south-east Tibet, I was surprised and intrigued to see a dwarf bronzy-yellow *Allium* with tight heads of individually rather large bell-shaped flowers. The whole plant was no more than a few centimetres in height, so this appeared to be a species that would have considerable attraction to alpine enthusiasts.

Further investigation revealed that this is the plant that was described in 1931 from China by H.K.Airy-Shaw as *Allium chalcophengos*. It is a high altitude plant, 4-5000 m, growing in a variety of situations - ledges, wet screes and boggy meadows are recorded habitats - flowering in June or July. The flower colour is variable, partly (or possibly mainly) depending upon the age of the flower; on field notes it is said to be 'yellow', 'yellow straw, purple tipped', 'crimson, tipped brassy yellow', and 'deep rose crimson, yellowish at base'. The Ernest Wilson collection upon which Airy-Shaw based his new species was said to be bronzy yellow and this is what *chalcophengos* refers to, but it is clear that the plant either comes in different colour forms or undergoes a marked colour change during the life of the flowers. The Chinese botanists Wang & Tang distinguished the red form as *A. chalcophengos* var. *atropurpureum*, but some authorities have sunk the species altogether into *A. atrosanguineum* - generally much taller with purple-red flowers from the western Himalaya - or into *A. monadelphum*. Whatever the truth, this dwarf version with brassy yellow flowers is a charmer.



A rash of *Fritillaria* names

David King, researching western North American fritillaries, contacted us one day to say that he had come across a name that was causing some concern - *F. utahensis*, what is it? "I'll check on it and get back to you" always sounds slightly better than "I haven't the faintest clue", so this was the interim reply and, after a not too difficult search the answer was found. It was published in 1920 by M. Gandoger (this is usually a hint that it might not be a very 'good' species when it comes to authenticity) in the Bulletin of the Botanical Society of France, along with several other species. It seems that he decided that *F. pudica*, which he viewed as being polymorphic, could be separated into several species: *F. leucella*, *F. dichroa*, *F. washingtonensis*, *F. utahensis*, *F. oregonensis* and *F. oreodoxa*. He did provide a key to them, and duplicates of some of the specimens cited are in the Kew herbarium. It seems that these observations were based entirely on dried specimens, and that flower colour and size, and leaf arrangement, were the main factors involved in their recognition. Thus we have *F. leucella* with white flowers (yellow flowers often dry white), *F. dichroa* with reddish flowers 2 cm long and the lowest leaves whorled, *F. washingtonensis* with reddish flowers 3 cm long and leaves sparsely arranged, *F. utahensis* with yellow flowers and wide, blunt leaves, *F. oregonensis* with yellow flowers 2 cm long and narrow, acute leaves that curve outwards, and *F. oreodoxa* with yellow flowers 3 cm long and narrow, acute leaves that are held stiffly erect. None of these characteristics seem to 'work', looking at a wider range of specimens. The very widespread *F. pudica* embraces all such variation - the flowers are often tinged red, especially in the later stages, the lower leaves can be clustered or spread out on the stem, they can be narrow to quite wide, etc. So, I think it fair to say that they can be regarded as straight synonyms of *F. pudica*. Until someone does a survey and says otherwise!

More on *Lilium nepalense*

Mary Randall's plea for information about *Lilium nepalense* prompted Mike and Polly Stone of Fort Augustus to send the following remarks about this beautiful plant; there seems to be little doubt about its hardiness in view of their success.

"The secret here is to let it do its own thing, the flowers hanging out from a surrogate minicliff of good Ballachulish slate. We were given *L. nepalense* by Bobby Masterton in the early 1970s and planted it outside in a raised bed in what passes for full sun up here. The retaining wall around this bed is of thick local slates, taken from the roof of the ruined cottage which preceded Askival on this site, laid flat without mortar. The lily has run very freely pushing out horizontally between the slates where the stems then turn upwards and flower more freely than within the bed.

Viable seed has been set on several occasions, possibly correlating with lack of late frosts. Our chief hazard is not ants, but people walking by the bed and knocking off the protruding seedheads." Mike adds that he is fairly sure that this planting is all one clone, so it must be self-fertile; Polly has raised seedlings but there is little incentive to do this when it spreads so prolifically by vegetative means.

Bookends

A new addition to the Kirstenbosch Gardening Series is *Grow Clivias* by Graham Duncan, a beautifully illustrated (in colour) A5 booklet of 48 pages. There is a brief history of the genus, descriptions of the various cultivars and advice on growing and propagation, and lists of Clivia Clubs and nurseries. For those who think that Clivias begin and end with the orange-red *C. miniata* then this will be quite a revelation - stunning forms of this and the other species, and of the hybrids between them. *Grow Clivias* is R29.50, obtainable from the Kirstenbosch Shop, Tel:(021)762-1621;Fax:(021)762-0923;e-mail bookshop@nbipre.nbi.ac.za

Just arrived in the post, and thus not much room or time to fit it in, is the intriguingly titled *Flowering Bulbs for Dummies* by Judy Glattstein which is designed like the well-known computer aids that people like me need so badly! This is intended for beginners and those who need a reminder from time to time as to what to do and how to do it, and when. Forcing hyacinths is a good example, but the whole of bulb growing is in here in a very easily assimilated form. Price £15.99, IDG Books. ISBN 0-7645-5103-5

Catalogues

The Croft Wild Bulb Nursery at the foot of the Amatola Mountains near Stutterheim in the Eastern Cape has an interesting list of both winter-growing and summer-growing subjects - these are sent out in January or June/July respectively which, for growers in the northern hemisphere is 6 months 'out', so they will require some acclimatization. Just look at the selection! In the summer-growers there are three *Boophane* spp., 7 *Cyrtanthus* spp., 4 *Haemanthus* spp., 8 *Nerine* spp., several *Eucomis* including *E. montana*, while winter growers include *Crinum variable*, *Brunsvigia bosmaniae* and *Cybisetes longifolia* - a whole new world of conservatory subjects for bulb enthusiasts! The seed list contains many more and could possibly be the best way to import them if a change of hemispheres is involved. The Croft Nursery, P.O. Box 1053, Stutterheim, South Africa 4930. Tel/Fax:(027)43-6832796; e-mail:croft@eci.co.za

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