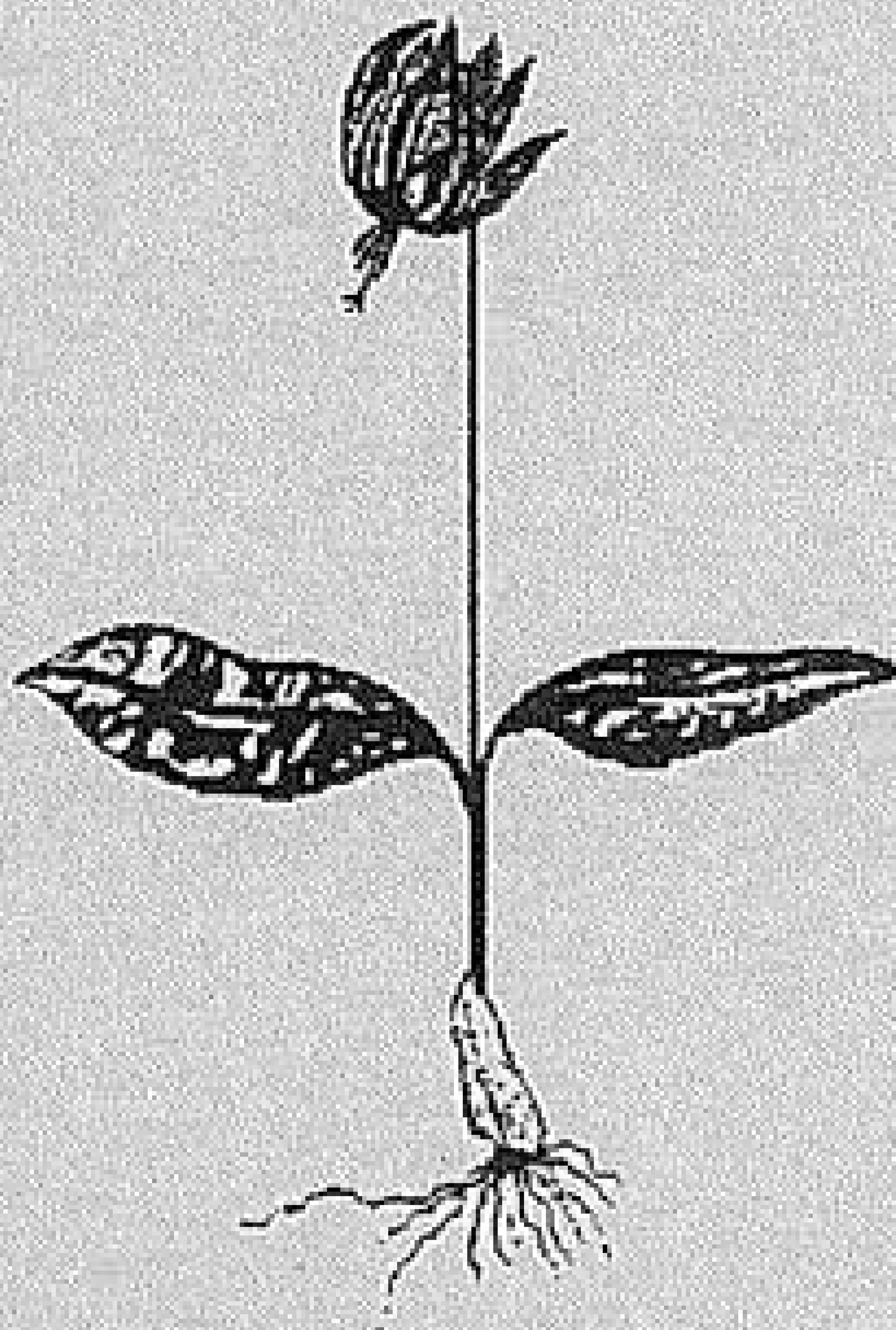


***THE BULB***  
***NEWSLETTER***



Number 7

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## The Bulb Newsletter No. 7

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### *A curious new Saudi Arabian Albuca.*

*Albuca* species (Liliaceae/Hyacinthaceae) are not widely cultivated: they are perhaps collectors' bulbs, although a few of them are really quite attractive. They are mostly not frost hardy, so have to be grown under cover, and most people have rather limited greenhouse space which they prefer to keep for other things; this odd new *Albuca* gets around the space problem by being a hanging basket plant! I first became aware of this a few years ago when Mrs Sheila Collenette, who has done so much work in recent years in collecting and documenting the flora of Arabia (and is author of the splendid *Illustrated Guide to the Flowers of Saudi Arabia*), visited the Herbarium at Kew with an enormously long (I seem to be prone to receiving these!: see BN6:5) parcel containing an *Albuca*-in-a-basket, the leaves draping down to nearly 2 metres in length and the flowers about to open. Sheila had seen this growing on some cliffs in the south-west of the country in the Jabal Qahar massif and suspected it to be something unknown, partly on account of the long narrow leaves hanging down the cliff face; a dormant bulb of it was sent first to the well-known orchid grower Marcel Lecoufle of Boissy Saint-Léger in France and from then it was transported in full growth across the sea to Kew where it continued its development and was duly hung, drawn and squashed for the Herbarium. A description was prepared, and just recently it was christened *A. pendula* (in *Kew Bulletin* 49:125, 1994). One plant is currently housed at 90 Foley Road where it has been flowering for about two months, kept in a frost-free section of the greenhouse. I decided to try growing it conventionally in a pot to see if it was indeed pendent or whether it just could not do anything else in the wild, given that it occurred on a small ledges high up on cliffs. However, it is an inherently droopy plant; the leaves grew sideways and over the edge of the pot and then flopped everywhere, the inflorescence did likewise and only turned up right at the tip so that the actual flower spike was held upright. So, next year, back to the hanging basket it is!

*A. pendula* is a very leafy plant, the mature flowering bulb having about 8 long narrowly lanceolate leaves up to 2 m long and at most 6 cm wide. I measured the total leaf surface and this came to nearly 2800 cm<sup>2</sup>, a surprising amount when one considers that it is a plant of a dry habitat, which usually results in narrow leaves to cut down water loss. Shade-loving monocots, for example Hostas, frequently have leaves with a large

surface area, but not ones from this sort of habitat. The inflorescence (i.e., the whole flowering stem and the spike) is a metre or so long, pendent for most of its length but the apical portion containing the flowers turns upwards and carries a dense spike of up to 45 flowers; these are each nearly 3 cm long and have the rather characteristic *Albuca* shape with the three inner perianth segments held close together, almost forming a tube, and the three outer ones spreading out rather more widely. The colour is a good yellow with a green stripe along the centre of each segment, and there is a noticeable fragrance. It is most closely related to the normally upright *A. abyssinica* which is very widespread in East Africa but which can also be found in the Arabian Peninsula. *A. pendula* has to qualify as a 'botanical interest' plant, but surely it has also some status as one of the most unusual hanging basket plants there is.



There can be very few cliff-dwelling pendent-leaved bulbous plants; at present I can think only of *Ornithogalum reverchonii* from Spain, *Galtonia regia* (see below) from the Drakensberg, *Gladiolus cardinalis* from the south-western Cape and *Petronymphe decora* from Mexico (see page 3). Maybe other enthusiasts can think of some more examples?

### *Another hanging basket idea?*

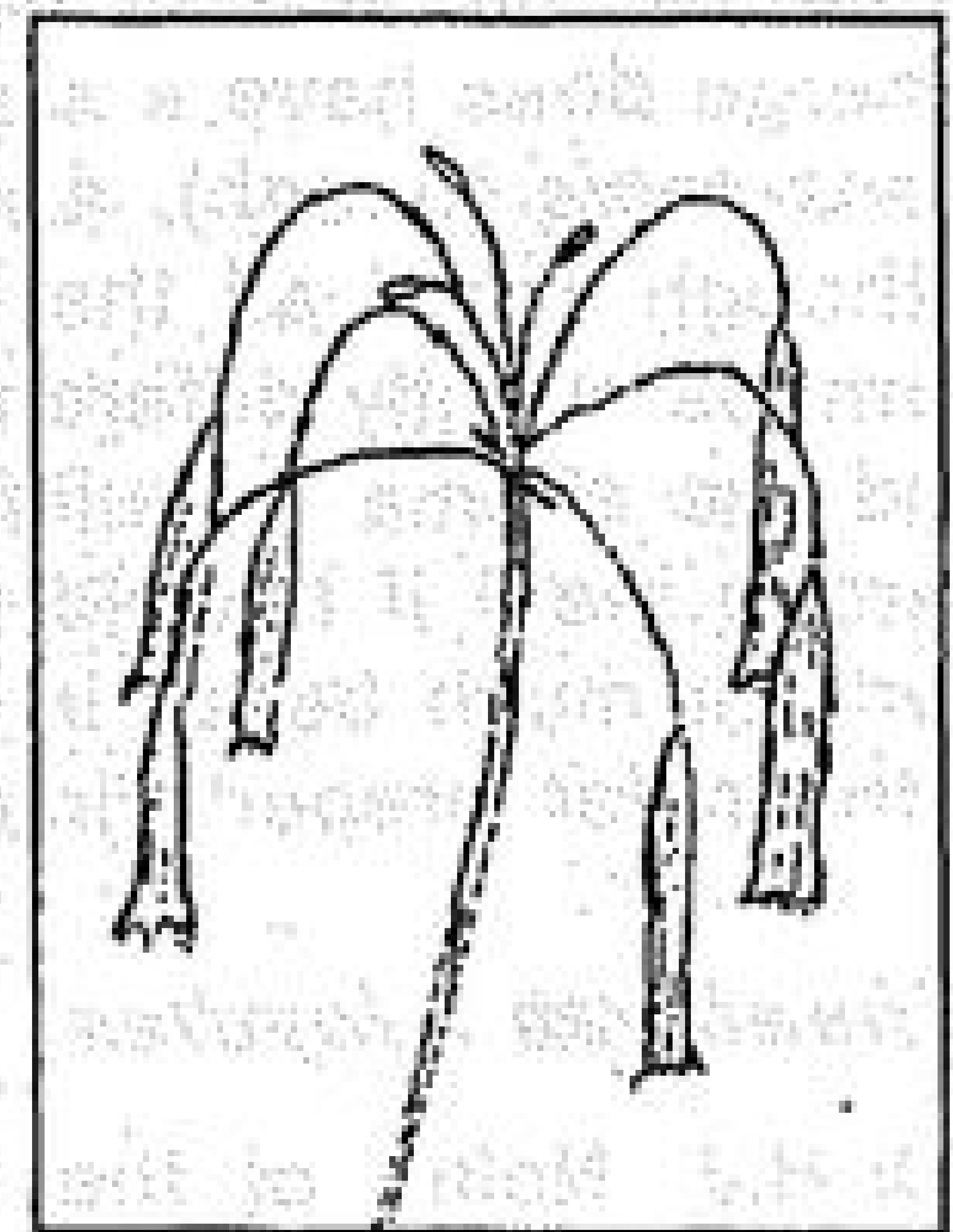
Recently I saw an advert (in *Horticulture, The Magazine of American Gardening*) for some rather ornamental wire baskets; one of them was filled with *Cyclamen hederifolium* in flower, and actually looking very attractive. For those who are not too purist about their gardening this is quite an idea for extending the 'basket season' into the autumn months and makes a change from Petunias and Lobelias. Actually, I remember seeing *Cyclamen elegans* (I am not entirely convinced that this is just *C. coum*) growing up on the branches of trees in the Caspian woods of Iran, so maybe it is not such a weird idea! In reasonably mild districts *C. hederifolium*-in-a-basket would continue to be of interest through the winter months for its foliage but in cold areas any serious frosts could well freeze it solid and kill off the tubers.

### *The Regal Galtonia*

I regard *Galtonia candicans* as quite a regal-looking plant, but the most recent of the Galtonias to be described [see Hilliard & Burt in *Notes Royal Bot. Garden Edinburgh* 43:345-405, 1986] was not named *G. regalis* because of its appearance but partly because it was found in the Royal Natal National Park, and partly in view of 'its lofty enthronement on the cliffs of the Tugela Gorge'. This species, which is still quite rare in cultivation, resembles *G. viridiflora* but has longer dark green leaves, up to 55 cm in length at flowering time, and the flowers are of a more yellow-green. The flower stem may reach 80 cm with up to 20 pendent flowers. Galtonias are all summer-growers. *G. viridiflora* is completely hardy here in Surrey so I have ceased to lift the bulbs for the winter and it is seeding around now, but *G. princeps* and *G. candicans* do not survive reliably. *G. regalis* inhabits cliffs at up to 10,000 ft altitude, so this sounds promising as far as hardiness is concerned. The absence of a cliff in the garden is not a major setback; I understand that it will grow in an upright position.

### *The Pretty Rock Nymph*

Well, that is how *Petronymphe decora* translates, and it does appear to be quite a graceful plant. I know this only as a specimen which had once flowered at Kew and had subsequently been preserved as a herbarium specimen. I would love to know if anyone still grows it. The history of *P. decora* is as follows: H.E. Moore described it as a new species in 1951 (*Gentes Herbarum* 8:258); a cultivated plant flowered at the Bailey Hortorium in the summer of 1952; A.R. Mann sent a corm of it from the Bailey Hortorium to Kew where it flowered in 1956 and was painted for *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* (tab. 369); the Kew specimen represents the voucher material for this painting. *Petronymphe* (Liliaceae/Alliaceae) is a *Milla* & *Bessera* relative which is described as a 'graceful inhabitant of niches and ledges on lime outcrops', growing gregariously and having 'lax leaves forming attractive mats hanging over the rocks'. The yellowish-green flowers are carried in a loose umbel, each on a long slender arching pedicel (up to 8 cm long), and are narrowly tubular, the actual joined part of the tube about 5 cm long and the six short lobes about 6-7 mm; the appearance is enhanced by deep blue-violet anthers.



The leaves are up to 64 cm long and only 7 mm wide and the corm has a shiny brown tunic. It is said to be very local in the wild, occurring in the State of Guerrero, '337-338 km beyond Acahuizotla on the road to Acapulco'. I am sure that looking for a decorative rock nymph somewhere on the road to Acapulco will appeal to some of our readers!

### *Erythronium sibiricum*

I have only had the opportunity to grow this in the last few years and have been surprised at the difference between it and the European *E. dens-canis* in this respect. Most noticeably, it is much later coming into growth, a matter of 6-8 weeks later; in fact *E. dens-canis* had fat seed pods this year when *E. sibiricum* was just pushing through the ground. It is not an easy to please here in the south of England and I find that it tends to open its buds as they appear above ground, often in an upright position so that they catch the rain in the centre and rot off. This is quite a well-known problem with bulbs from cold or high altitude areas: it happens with *Fritillaria alburyana*, *Scilla rosenii*, and some of the western United States alpine Erythroniums such as *E. purpurascens* and *E. klamathense*. However, this year I had potted some and kept them in a shady frame where they were covered to protect them from rain, but with open ends to allow plenty of ventilation and as much cold air as possible to pass through. This has met with much greater success and, although not show quality, I have enjoyed a reasonable flowering of several different colour forms from white to deep lilac. *E. sibiricum* is very distinct from *E. dens-canis*. It has almost plain green leaves, at most rather indistinctly mottled (although the latest one to emerge does have a slightly more obvious brown mottling, nothing like *E. dens-canis*, though), and the flower stem is very thick and robust-looking, although short; all the forms I have seen have had yellow anthers with perhaps slightly differently shaped filaments from those of *E. dens-canis*, and the stigma is quite widely expanded and frilly. It would be a lovely garden plant if I could find the right spot for it, but I suspect that it will perform much better in the colder parts of Scotland, and other countries with similar 'proper' winters!

### *Himalayan Lloydias*

Dr.H.J. Noltie of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Edinburgh has recently published some work on the *Lloydia* species of the eastern Himalaya, in connection with his work on the *Flora of Bhutan* which is in preparation there. In 'Notes relating to the flora of Bhutan' (*Edinburgh Journ. Bot.* 50(1):51-57,1993) he describes a new species, *L. delicatula*, reports the occurrence of *L. yunnanensis* in the Himalaya and 'sinks' *L. himalensis* into

the most well-known species, *L.serotina*. Henry Noltie identifies two dwarf high alpine species in the region, one of which I remember seeing as a tiny crevice plant on the AGS Sikkim Expedition in 1983. The two are *L.serotina* var. *parva*, a miniature tufted variant of the species, and *L.delicatula*, the latter is a newly recognised species which has upright white flowers (usually pendent in *L.serotina*) in which the perianth segments are on the whole shorter than those of *L.serotina*, and they are narrow with a subacute apex (broader and more rounded in *L.serotina* var. *parva*); additionally, the nectaries on the inside of the segments are conspicuous in *L.delicatula* and minute or absent in *L.serotina* var. *parva*.

The larger *L.yunnanensis* is compared with *L.serotina* var. *serotina*, both of which are also white-flowered, veined purplish or brown. Tables are given showing the comparative sizes of various floral parts, the most striking of which concerns the style: 8.2-11.5 mm long in *L.yunnanensis* and 2.8-4 mm in *L.serotina*, the perianth segments also differ in shape and size, the outer ones of *L.yunnanensis* being 2.5-4 mm wide and those of *L.serotina*, 4.2-8 mm wide. Distributions for the species mentioned are also given in some detail.

Lloydias are delightful small members of the Liliaceae but are little-cultivated, being quite tricky to keep. The majority of species are either mountain plants or occur in cold northern climates, and undoubtedly require cooler more humid growing conditions than I can provide in the south of England. I did manage to keep for a while the lovely *L.flavonutans*, brought back by the Sikkim expedition in 1983, but it never thrived and eventually died; it is a slender 5-10 cm plant with sizeable pendent yellow bells, looking very like *Fritillaria pudica*. The one species which is very easy to cultivate is *Lloydia graeca*, but this has been deemed to be a *Gagea*, so does not now qualify as the easiest Lloydial! This is widespread in Greece and Turkey, often at very low altitudes; being Mediterranean, it can be treated like other bulbs from this winter rainfall region, so is totally different in its cultivation requirements from the alpine and Himalayan/Chinese species with hard winters and summer rainfall; this also has white bell-shaped flowers so is very unlike most other Gageas with their yellow starry flowers.

### ***Chilean Iridaceae Notes***

R.A.Rodriguez and C.Marticorena have published (*Gayana, Bot.* 49(1-4):43-45(1992) a new distribution record for *Olsynium luteum*, a rare species from the Andes; it has been found in Elqui Province (Rio Claro at 3200 metres), the Cordillera de Santiago at 3000 m and the Reserva

Forestal Rio Clarillo at 200 m; it flowers in November in the wild. *O. luteum* was formerly *Chamelum luteum* until Peter Goldblatt transferred it to the genus *Olsynium* (see BN2:4-5); he noted that it was an inadequately known species, collected only once. In the same paper, Rodriguez & Marticorena have transferred *Solenomelus nigricans* (= *Sisyrinchium nigricans*, *Symphostemon nigricans*, *Susarium nigricans*) to the genus *Olsynium*, as *O. nigricans* (whether Peter Goldblatt agrees with this I have not yet enquired). They also record the presence of *Mastigostyla cyrtophylla* in Chile, a species which was originally described from Peru; this is a *Cypella* relative with violet-blue flowers 6-7 cm across, having three large outer perianth segments and three small, very narrow, inner ones; like most of this group of S. American Irids, the leaves are pleated.

### *Iridaceae in Brazil*

Nadia Said Chukr from the University of São Paulo has been studying the Iridaceae of the Serra do Cipó in the State of Minas Gerais and has described (in *Boletim de Botânica, Univ. of São Paulo* 13:103-109, 1992) a new species of *Pseudotrimezia* (*P. gracilis*) and a new variety of *Trimezia fistulosa*, var. *longifolia*. In addition she has provided an account of all the Iridaceae of the Serra do Cipó, and it is obviously a rather rich area.

There are:

2 *Sisyrinchium*: *S. vaginatum* (into which are 'sunk' *S. alatum*, *S. marchio* & *S. incurvatum*), *S. nidulare* (syn. *S. minense*)

1 *Cipura*: *C. paludosa*

1 *Neomarica*: *N. rupestris*

5 *Trimezia*: *T. violacea*, *T. lutea*, *T. truncata*, *T. juncifolia*, *T. fistulosa* & *fistulosa* var. *longifolia*

2 *Pseudotrimezia*: *P. cipoana* (syn. *P. sublateralis*), *P. gracilis*

Keys to the genera and species are provided and there are full descriptions and line drawings of each. *Trimezia* and *Pseudotrimezia* species are little-known in cultivation, although there are a few of the former around in specialist collections. They are very attractive with individually short-lived, rather *Cypella*-like flowers in yellow or blue. The 'rootstock' is bulb-like and covered with tough fibrous tunics; the leaves are very tough, usually narrow and often cylindrical, sometimes strongly arched over. In *Trimezia* the

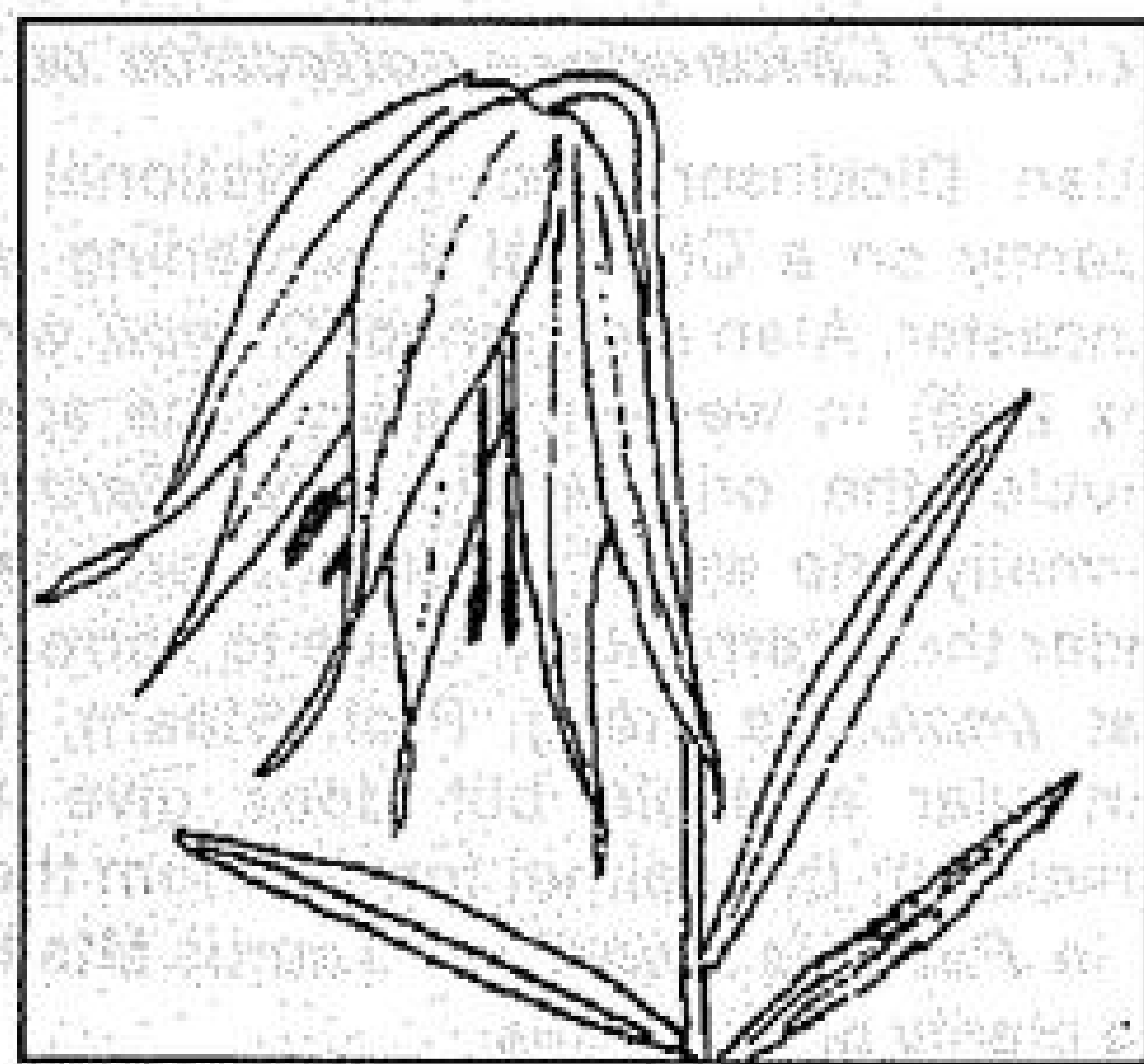
flowers have three large outer perianth segments and three smaller inner ones which are narrow at the base and rolled over at the apex into a rams horn shape. *Pseudotrimezia* has a much more regular flower shape with the inner segments similar to and almost as large as the outer three, so it is more like those of *Sisyrinchium* species, although in growth habit the plant is more like a *Trimezia*. *Trimezia* flowers have striking transverse bands of a darker colour in the centre, on the lower parts of the segments whereas *Pseudotrimezias* are rather inconspicuously veined.

*Cipura paludosa* is a widespread plant in C & S.America; it has small pale blue flowers which have the outer perianth segments spreading and the inner erect. The cluster of flowers is overtopped by a long leaf-like bract so that the flowers appear to arise in the axil of a leaf rather than at the apex of the stem. If these plants are introduced into cultivation they will require heated glasshouse treatment in areas outside the tropics, and will probably behave as summer growers. It should be noted that P.F.Ravenna regards the genera *Trimezia* and *Neomarica* as inseparable, so the latter is 'sunk' into *Trimezia*.

### *Lilies, dwarf and rare*

An excitement in recent years has been the reappearance in cultivation of some of the dwarf Chinese and Himalayan lilies. Mike and Polly Stone are quite successful with these in their northern garden in Fort Augustus, Inverness-shire, Scotland, and have relayed the following information.

'You may be interested in the reintroduction of *Lilium lophophorum*. Our original plants came from the SRGC [Scottish Rock Garden Club] 1983/4 seed exchange listed as *Fritillaria* sp. H23 collected by Ruben Hatch in the Segurian Alps. Their true identity was revealed with the first flower in 1987 and home-grown seed was set the following year. One eventually produced five flowers which Ron McBeath jokingly described as 'out of character' at Alpines '91 in Warwick. The second generation set seed last year, so we felt we could pass on a small batch of bulbs into commerce. They appear no more difficult to grow than others of the





nanum group [they are fairly tricky here in Surrey in the “hot dry” southeast - BM]. Last autumn we were given a bulb of *L.souliei*, it isn't up yet and we have our fingers firmly crossed! These small lilies are some of our favourite garden plants, but to keep them going we have to continually sow seed. They seem to have a programmed lifespan’.

*Lilium lophophorum* is from western China and has short stems (up to 45 cm), apparently usually carrying 1 or 2 (in the wild, or up to 5 in cultivation in Fort Augustus!) rather bell-shaped creamy-yellow or greenish-yellow pendent flowers with long tapering, and often twisted, tips to the six perianth segments; the nectary at the base of the segments is crested, or bearded, hence the name which is derived from the Greek *lophos*, a crest, and *phoros*, wearing or carrying.

### *White-seeded Iris foetidissima*

My report on the availability of the white-seeded version of *Iris foetidissima* (BN6:19) was partly a case of casting bread upon the waters to see what would rise to the surface. Richard Nutt has pointed out that it is reputed not to come true from seed; however, I have not heard of anyone who has raised a sizeable batch of seedlings through to flowering/fruitletting to see if they all turn out to be the ordinary red-seeded form; my own are a year or two away from flowering. Richard tells me that the Japanese plantsman Mikinori Ogisu saw the plant in his garden earlier this year and used a lot of long botanical words to explain why it would not breed true! However, I would still like to hear from anyone who has grown a batch from white seeds, just as confirmation that it does not work.

### *NCCPG Chionodoxa collection on TV*

Alan Dickinson and his National Collection of *Chionodoxa* featured recently on a Channel 4 gardening programme, in an interview with Roy Lancaster. Alan mentioned *C.tmoli*, which was named after Mt Tmolus (now Boz Dağ) in western Turkey. The spelling of this plant has caused some trouble; the original (in *The Garden* 35:367, 1889) was *C.tmolusi* and normally one would follow the original spelling; however, it is permissible under the International Code to correct mistakes and in this case it appears that *tmolusi* is wrong. Prof. Stearn, in *Botanical Latin*, does not cite this particular example but does give Emodus (the Greek name for the Himalaya); the epithet formed from the genitive ('of the Emodus') is *emodi*, as in *Paeonia emodi*, the Taurus Mts have given rise to *Iris tauri* etc.; there are plenty of examples.

*Chionodoxa tmoli* is one of the least well-known of the Turkish chiono-

doxas: it was described by Whittall in 1889 from specimens gathered on Boz Dağ but had a rather scant description; new collections from there are needed in order to compare with plants from other mountains in western Turkey, namely "C. luciliae of gardens" (probably should be called *C. siehei* [from Nif Dağ & Tahtali Dağ], the true *C. luciliae* (= *C. gigantea*) [also from Boz Dağ], *C. forbesii* [from Baba Dağ], and *C. sardensis* [from Mahmout Dağ].

### ***Flora Malesiana***

This long-running Flora project has just published accounts of the Alliaceae and Amaryllidaceae. The former is relatively unexciting for those who are mainly interested in wild plants since all the representatives in this area of Southeast Asia are introduced, mainly as crop plants; so, all the usual onions and their allies are mentioned plus a few which are less well-known outside the area. The Amaryllidaceae account also contains many introduced plants, grown for their ornamental value, but there are descriptions of some interesting natives of the region, for example *Pancratium zeylanicum*, a widespread species, *Crinum asiaticum*, also widespread, *Crinum gracile* from Sumatra, the Philippines and New Guinea, *Proiphys amboinensis*, widespread and otherwise known as *Pancratium a.* and *Eurycles a.*, and *Proiphys alba* which occurs only in Australia and New Guinea. These last two are attractive plants with umbels of sizeable white flowers, each somewhat *Pancratium*-like with a cup in the centre; their leaves are evergreen and broadly elliptical, heart-shaped or kidney-shaped. They are more or less tropical bulbs and in temperate zones will require greenhouse cultivation with a minimum temperature of about 15 deg. C. In addition to these 'proper' Amaryllids there are some members of the Hypoxidaceae, a family which is included as a Tribe within the Amaryllidaceae by some authorities. *Hypoxis aurea* is common and widespread in the region, and there are several *Curculigo* species. Anyone interested in Flora Malesiana Volume 11, part 2 should contact the Publication Department, Rijksherbarium/Hortus Botanicus, P.O. Box 9514, 2300 R A Leiden, The Netherlands.

### ***Narcissus News***

In the most recent issue of *Daffodils*, or the *Daffodil and Tulip Yearbook* 1993-4 (published by the RHS, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PE, £4.99) there is an interesting article by Michael Salmon, long-time student of the genus *Narcissus*, in which he expresses his views on the group of trumpet daffodil species related to *N. pseudonarcissus*. He has grouped the species into five main groups, plus three lone species which appear to be relatively

unrelated to any of the others. The groups are:

**Pseudonarcissus** (*N.pseudonarcissus* and its variants)

**Asturiensis** (the small species, *N.asturiensis* and the slightly larger *N.jacetanus*)

**Pallidiflorus** (the uniformly pale-flowered ones, *N.pallidiflorus* and *N.macrobolbos*)

**Bicolor** (contains all the variants with bicolored flowers)

**Hispanicus** (single-coloured species including *N.hispanicus*, *N.radinganorum* [see note at end of this item & also BN 4:9] and *N.longispathus*)

The three odd ones are *N.nevadensis*, which has an umbel of flowers, the white-flowered *N.alpestris* and the most distinct of them all, *N.cyclamineus*. Michael also mentions many natural hybrids, and provides drawings and distribution maps, so this is a valuable contribution, based on many years study of wild populations.

Also in the same issue is an article by another very experienced daffodilologist, John Blanchard, describing a search for a fascinating wild hybrid between *N.poeticus* and *N.alpestris*; there is proof of success in the form of a colour photograph.

The Daffodil and Tulip Yearbook contains many articles and notes on a range of topics including Shows, recent developments in Narcissus cultivars, pests and diseases etc.

\* I have been asked about the spelling of *N. radinganorum*; the species is named after Reading, since it was cultivated at the University following its collection in Spain by Messrs Ackeroyd, Goyder & Jury. Reading, to the Romans, was Radinga; the adjective would be *radinganus*, so that the Latin epithet means 'of the Radingans'. I must ask the Reading'ns if they can spare me a bulb sometime!

### *The Tenby Daffodil*

For those who are interested in the history of the Tenby Daffodil, *Narcissus obvallaris*, which appears to be a variant of *N. pseudonarcissus*, there is a substantial booklet by David Jones, published by Tenby Museum in 1992 [Castle Hill, Tenby, Pembrokeshire SA70 7BP]. There are, of course, many views as to whether it is truly native there and where it actually originated and, of course, what its name should be, but it's an interesting story.

## *Labels*

In response to my note about labels (BN 6:13), I have received various comments, including the suggestion that they are best buried completely in the ground so that way they are protected from the destructive effects of the sun and the horrible things are hidden from view. Jeff Irons advises:

'burn, or carve, the name onto a piece of rot resistant wood. I use Opepe, another that would probably be suitable is the 'Baywood' used for vat staves. Teak offcuts, Elm, and Greenheart are others that come to mind. If anyone has access to Huon Pine oddments, that would be the best of all.'

Joy Bishop kindly presented me with a sample of plastic labels which are reputed to be weather-resistant, so I look forward to putting these to the test; perhaps this will be the end of sitting for ages trying to match together shattered remnants of several labels which have been trodden on by foxes or our dog. These were obtained from MBF Ltd, 144 Neilston Road, Paisley, PA2 6QN, in case anyone wishes to give them a try; the samples Joy has given me are 8, 10 and 12 cm long.

## *New Chinese Asparagus and Onions*

Chinese botanists have described some more *Allium* species, and a curious dwarf species of *Asparagus*. This is *A. dolichorhizomatous* (*dolicho* means long, so 'long-rhizomed'), with stems 10-30 cm tall from Gansu Province. The stems are densely clothed with congested bunches of very slender 'leaves' (known as 'cladodes' in the genus *Asparagus*), each one up to 4 cm in length. The flowers are bell-shaped and yellow-green or purplish, the male ones 6-8 mm long and the female 4-6 mm long, followed by red berries. The name indicates the nature of the underground part, a very long creeping rhizome. I doubt that many bulb enthusiasts grow *Asparagus*, other than the edible variety, but I thought it would make a change; after all it is a petaloid monocot! In the same publication (*Acta Phytotaxonomica Sinica* 31,4:374-377,1993), there are two new *Allium* species which are apparently long in name and short in appeal. *A.xiangchengense* is a clump-forming species up to 26 cm tall with a 2.5-3 cm diameter umbel of white flowers, each flower about 1 cm wide; it is said to be related to *A.hookeri*. *A.guanxianense* is also clump-forming with stems up to 60 cm tall, each bearing a 3-4 cm umbel of white flowers; this has distinctive leaves, wider towards the apex (2-3 cm wide), tapering all the way to the base. I love alliums, but I already have rather a lot which have small umbels on long stems, so I will not be rushing to try to acquire these,

although I am sure the *Allium* enthusiasts will.

### *Anthophoros*

George and Chrysanthi Sfikas of Athens, Greece, have founded a 'Centre for the Protection of the Greek Flora', the purpose of which is to 'save, protect and propagate threatened plant species in Greece, and to protect their biotypes'; they are hoping to solicit help from universities, ecological organisations, friends, colleagues and anyone else who is concerned over the future of the Greek flora. The Centre is called Anthoforus and is publishing a pamphlet '*Anthophorus*', of which numbers 1 and 2 (1994) have already appeared. The logo of the Centre is the 'Prince of Lilies' from Knossos. Number 1 contains the Founding Declaration and an article on newly recorded sites for various species; monocots included in the list are: *Colchicum autumnale* (Mt.Tzena & Mt.Achlat Tsal, Xanthi), *Colchicum amabile* (Ithaki Is.), *Lilium chalcedonicum* (Euboea), and *Sternbergia colchiciflora* (Mt.Ghiona). Number 2 has an article on *Leucojum valentinum* which is an autumnal species with a disjunct distribution in S.Spain and the Ionian Islands. The species is now known to occur in Cephalonia, Lefkas and Ithaka. There is also an article on *Hemerocallis fulva*, a Chinese species which has become naturalised in Greek Macedonia, and another on *Amaryllis belladonna* which is noted as being commonly naturalised in olive groves throughout the island of Paxos, and is also in Corfu. The islanders of Paxos 'consider it to be poisonous and take great care to uproot it wherever they find it'. Maybe this would be a useful export for them, at the same time disposing of non-native species. Among the species newly recorded for Cephalonia is *Narcissus tazetta* subsp. *italicus*. We wish George and Chrysanthi all the best with their venture; anyone interested can contact them at 2 Vyzantiou Str., Argyproupolis, 16 452 Athens, Greece.

### *The New Plantsman and a new Snowdrop*

The first issue of *The New Plantsman* (Editor: Victoria Matthews) has now been published and, like its predecessor, contains articles on a range of topics, but the journal has had a complete facelift and is nicely illustrated using photographs, paintings and drawings. Of particular monocot interest in Vol. 1 is an article by Aaron Davies and Chris Brickell describing a newly-discovered autumn flowering *Galanthus* from southern Turkey, *G.peshmenii*. This is similar to the Greek *G. reginae-olgae* but differs in its leaf characters, most noticeably in lacking a conspicuous central stripe, but also in anatomical details. The leaves are also rather floppy so that, when growing on cliffs, as some populations do, they hang down; another candidate for a hanging basket, perhaps? It is named in honour of

the Turkish botanist H. Peşmen who drew attention to the plant when it was first collected in 1978. Bulb enthusiasts might also be interested in an article on the graceful little Japanese alpine orchids of the genus *Ponerorchis*, by the Sainsbury Orchid Fellow at Kew, Joyce Stewart. The *New Plantsman* is published quarterly by the Royal Horticultural Society, P.O. Box 38, Ashford, Kent TN25 6PR, U.K. Annual sub. is £25 (UK), £29 (elsewhere).

### *Award of Garden Merit*

This award, the AGM, has been reinstated (in 1992) and is bestowed by the Royal Horticultural Society upon 'plants of outstanding excellence for garden decoration or use'. All the previous awards given under the 'old' AGM were reappraised and a new list has now been published. This will never be a 'fixed' list since new plants are being added all the time, often as a result of a trial period in which as many similar species and their variants are assessed side by side. The criteria for inclusion on the list are: 1. Excellent for ordinary garden decoration (outdoors or under glass). 2. Good constitution. 3. Available in the trade, or available for propagation. 4. Not particularly susceptible to any pest or disease. 5. Should not require highly specialised growing conditions. 6. Should not be subject to an unreasonable degree of reversion from its characteristics. [Taken from the RHS booklet--see below].

Obviously there are a great many pitfalls in attempting to produce such a list but it does act as a quick guide to which plants are considered to be really good and reliable; some nurserymen are indicating in their catalogues which ones have received the AGM. The booklet where the list appears provides only the name, what type of plant it is (tree, shrub etc.) and there is a simple hardiness rating for the British Isles, from H1 for plants requiring heated glass to H4, plants which are thought to be hardy throughout the British Isles.

Obviously there are many bulbs in the list and a lot of them are exactly as one would predict, those first rate thoroughly good garden plants such as *Erythronium californicum* 'White Beauty', *Galanthus nivalis*, *Fritillaria meleagris*, *Crocus sieberi* and *Colchicum speciosum*. The Award of Garden Merit booklet can be obtained from the RHS Enterprises Ltd, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB, UK. Price £3.50 [+ £1.25 p&p(UK), £2.50 (outside UK)].

### *Cedar Mts, not Cedar Town*

Maurice 'Eagle-Eye' Boussard has noted an error in BN6:18, in my report on the Cape Seed and Bulb Company's list; my mistake, not theirs. The *Babiana* is not *B.cedarburgensis*, as I have it, but *B.cedarbergensis*, which is named after the mountain called Cedar Berg, SE of Clanwilliam in Cape Province. Thank you, Maurice.

### *Some new-ish Grape Hyacinths*

The flowering of *Muscari sandrasicum* in our greenhouse this year reminded me that several species have been described in recent years, mainly from Turkey, which some enthusiasts - yes, there are *Muscari* enthusiasts, including me - may have overlooked. *M. sandrasicum* was described by Thomas Karlén (*Willdenowia* 126:375, 1987) from Sandras Dağ in SW Turkey. This has 4-6 very slender glaucous leaves 1.5-4 mm wide, the flower stem reaches to about 10 cm and the raceme of flowers is 1-2 cm long; this carries up to 22 bell-shaped flowers, each of which is only 5 mm long and constricted at the mouth, although not as strongly as in some other species. Like most of the true Grape Hyacinths they are bright blue with small white lobes. In the case of *M. sandrasicum* there are no, or sometimes 1 or 2, sterile flowers at the tip of the raceme of fertile ones. This feature is one which is chosen by the author to distinguish it from *M. bourgaei*, which has a conspicuous tuft of up to 13 sterile flowers. In addition, *M. bourgaei* has broader, more V-shaped leaves with a conspicuous whitish line down the centre of the upper surface, and the flowers are more strongly constricted at the mouth. Like *M. bourgaei*, the new species is a snow-melt plant growing at 2100-2200 metres.

Karlén has also described *M. kerkis* (*Willdenowia* 14:112, 1984), named after Mt Kerkis on the Is. of Samos. This has 6-7 leaves only 1.5-2 mm wide, which do have a white line on the upper surface, an unusual feature in the genus *Muscari* (I can think of only this new species and *M. bourgaei* at present). The flower stem is up to 12 cm in height with a loosely-flowered raceme, 1.5-2.5 cm long, of 'dark magenta' flowers with paler lobes; the 8-17 fertile flowers are obovate or oblanceolate, that is they are wider towards the apex but are of course, like other species, constricted just at the mouth, and are about 5 mm long; the 5-12 sterile ones are slightly shorter and pale blue. This grows in stony ground at 600-900 metres. I have not seen this plant yet but it is said to resemble the widespread *M. neglectum* in having very dark flowers.

*M. mirum* (*mirum* means wonderful or extraordinary, so, as I said above, some people love them) was described in 1989 [*Phyton (Austria)* 29,1:107, 1989] from western Turkey and belongs to the Leopoldia group, or genus *Leopoldia*, if you prefer; this genus/group is comprised of *L. comosa*, *L. caucasica*, *L. tenuiflora*, *L. longipes*, *L. massayana* etc., the so-called Tassle Hyacinths because of the conspicuous tuft of brightly coloured sterile flowers at the summit of the inflorescence in some of the species; they mostly have rather longer flowers than 'ordinary' Grape Hyacinths, oblong or cylindrical and rather angular at the tip, narrowed to a small mouth, and the colours of the fertile flowers are usually fairly dull yellow, brownish or green depending partly upon the age of the flower. The colour of the six small lobes of the flower has been used as one of the distinguishing features, some of the species (eg. *L. tenuiflora*) having black lobes, or 'teeth' as they are sometimes referred to, while others have yellow ones. The fertile flowers of *mirum* are cylindrical, 5-6 mm long and brownish with yellow-green teeth, while the sterile flowers are violet. The interesting feature about this species is the usually solitary glaucous leaf up to 3 cm wide, usually one per bulb. When I first met this species in Turkey in 1985, before it had been named, with its broad grey leaf almost lying on the rocky ground, I wondered if I was looking at *Allium akaka* or something similar, for it was not in flower when I saw it. I am very fond of these Leopoldias and have accumulated quite a collection; one which has made a good clump out in the garden is a white form of *L. comosa*: the fertile flowers are a dirty brown but the sterile 'tassle' is white. Another species which we grow is *L. longipes*, which Paul & Polly Furse christened the 'Kurdish Blue Hot Poker' because of the dense spikes which are violet-blue and conical when they first push up; as the plant goes into the fruiting stage the individual flower stalks, the pedicels, elongate enormously until they are as much as 8 cm or more long (*pes* is Latin for a foot, so *longipes* should mean 'long feet'; pedicel is usually translated as 'foot-stalk', so I suppose that *longipes* is 'long (foot) stalk' -convinced?! I find that the Leopoldias have persistent, fairly fleshy, roots but, even so, they are probably best moved during late summer or early autumn like other winter rainfall bulbs.

### *Amaryllis* --- again!

The thorny old question as to what Linnaeus intended when he used the name *Amaryllis belladonna* - was it the familiar South African species or a South American Amaryllid now known as *Hippeastrum* (but still referred to as 'Amaryllis' in garden centres and supermarkets) - has long been resolved and there is international agreement that *Amaryllis belladonna* will



refer to the South African plant. So, there is little more to be said, and a good thing too, but L.S.Hannibal, long-time authority on the family Amaryllidaceae, does have some interesting additional information about this and has published his findings in *Notes from the Waimea Arboretum* 20(1): 2-5(1993). He traces the story through, from the time when Linnaeus first saw the plant in Holland in 1738, and sets out how the name arose and how various botanists, artists and horticulturists had been confused about its country of origin. Hannibal suggests that a painting by Georg Ehret, prepared at the garden of Clifford in Holland in 1738, represents the plant upon which Linnaeus based the name; it is a small variant of *A. belladonna* with red flowers on short pedicels. Although the actual origin of this plant is unknown, he remarks that it is similar to one grown in Madeira which was introduced by the Portuguese; it was subsequently also taken to California with emigrants from the island and is still in cultivation. [This article also appears in the IBSA Bulletin No. 41]

### *Chelsea 1994*

The Chelsea Flower Show never ceases to surprise me, even after 37 years of attending. I am sure that the range of plants displayed is steadily rising, and the quality is certainly undiminished. It is perhaps unfair to comment on a few exhibits because I am bound to have missed some items of interest in such an enormous show, but I will anyway. There were superb displays of a wide range of bulbs from Avon Bulbs, Broadleigh Gardens and Jacques Amand, and a fascinating and large collection of Alliums from Rupert Bowlby; seldom does any nurseryman take the risk of exhibiting only one genus of bulbs, except of course for Lilies, Tulips and Narcissus, so I found this a welcome change and great fun. Mrs McConnell used to put on a complete display of all her *Rhodohypoxis* varieties back in the 1960s but there have been very few 'monoculture' exhibits that I can remember. Jacques Amand had a splendid array of *Arisaema* species and North American Fritillarias (*F. recurva*, *F. phaeantha*, *F. affinis* etc.), there were lots of different Tulbaghias on the Avon Bulbs stand and Broadleigh showed their great range of Pacific Coast Iris hybrids. The range of variations on the Solomon's Seal theme is ever on the increase these days and it was interesting to see rarities such as *Disporum flavens* on display (Paradise Nurseries). The Alpine Garden Society (Gold Medal) rock garden included several variegated *Polygonatum*s, and the small grassy-leaved *P. graminifolium* with its tubular pink flowers, obviously related to the even dwarter *P. hookeri* but with longer narrower leaves arranged on 5 cm stems. Looking around the various stands it is clear that there is much confusion over the naming of *Polygonatum* species, especially the many variegated

forms. Monocotyledonous Gold Medals went to Amand, Avon, Butterfields (Pleiones), Cedarwood Lily Farm, Goldbrook Plants (Hostas), Tropical Rain Forest (Bromeliads) and Walkers (Daffodils); Silver-Gilt Flora Medals for Broadleigh, Bloms (Tulips), Park Green Nurseries (Hostas); Silver Flora Medals for Rupert Bowlby (Allium), Springwood (Pleiones); a Silver Grenfell Medal to the Trinidad & Tobago Horticultural Society (tropical Aroids) and a Bronze Flora Medal to W.S.Warmenhoven (Tulips). I love the Chelsea Show (in spite of having to go to London): where else can one see such a representation of the world's flora all under one roof in flower at the same time; and meet up with such a diversity of plants-people?

### *More bulb stamps*

Thank you, Ted Petts, for sending in a 25p stamp from Guernsey, depicting the blue Iris 'Ideal'. It looks like a member of subgenus *Xiphium* and is in fact a Dutch Iris (*I.xiphium* x *I.tingitana*) which was a sport of the well-known 'Wedgwood', selected by C.N.Koomen of Luttelgeest in The Netherlands, introduced by G. Hommes of Heiloo in 1956 and awarded an F.C.C. by the Royal General Bulbgrowers Association, Hillegom, in 1968. What a thing it is to have the right reference book!

A 29 cent stamp sent from the USA by Kelly Dodson of Reflective Gardens Nursery, Seattle, depicts the 'Smooth Solomon's Seal'. This is, perhaps, *Polygonatum biflorum* which is widespread in eastern North America.

Fred Bos has sent a very nicely produced 160 c. stamp of *Lilium bulbiferum* subsp. *croceum* (the Orange Lily or Roggelelie) from the Netherlands. Fred has made a 10-year study of this lily which is very rare in the wild in Holland; he has published his findings in *The Kew Magazine* (Vol. 10, part 4:190-197, 1993) and in *Natura* 91,2:27-31,1994 (in Dutch).

### *From the Postbag*

Norman Dawe from St.Austell, Cornwall, has written with details of a bucket of *Fritillaria pluriflora* which he grew from seed (AGS Seedlist, collected by Wayne Roderick). He sowed this 'in February 1989 and after 2 years in the alpine house the bulbs were planted in a 3 gallon bucket-like container and placed on the floor of a cool orchid house (minimum 45 degrees F.) where they have remained ever since, and this year, hey presto!'

Yvonne Matthews, also from Cornwall, near Truro, sent us recently a photo of an attractive watercolour which she did some years ago showing *Crocus korolkowii*. This had 'double' flowers with twice the complement of perianth segments, but the flowers were not consistent in their appearance from

year to year. This does seem to happen with crocuses and I do not know the reason; it appears to be a seasonal 'hiccup' rather than something more fundamental such as a 'sport' or virus infection; I have seen plants of *C.dalmaticus* in the wild with eight segments, the flower built up on the base number of 4 rather than the standard 3 for most monocots. There are, of course, double Lilies, a double *Erythronium dens-canis*, a double cream *Camassia leichtlinii*, double Trilliums, *Hemerocallis* etc., but I do not know of a persistent double Crocus; perhaps Iridaceae are reluctant to do this; all the examples above are in Liliaceae (in its wide sense).

### *From the Catalogues*

Monksilver Nursery has already established in its four years existence a reputation as a source of an extraordinary range of very unusual hardy perennials which are not just rarities but also good garden plants. The catalogue is produced in late summer/early autumn each year, so I am browsing through last year's list and inevitably some items will have sold out but, judging by previous lists, there will be other choice items to take their place in 1994. There are not many bulbs, of course, but we bulb enthusiasts have to keep a watch on as many lists as possible. Here, in the middle of a hardy perennial catalogue is *Lilium lophophorum*, grown from seeds collected in Lijiang! Also *L. pitkinense* and several variants of *L.martagon*, pink, white, deep purple-red and doubles. *Camassia quamash* 'Orion', a stocky variant with dark blue flowers, and *Iris setosa* 'Arctica'; both sound interesting, the latter presumably one of the Alaskan versions of *I.setosa* which are particularly striking. Monksilver Nursery (A.C.Leslie & J.L.Sharman), Oakington Road, Cottenham, Cambridge CB4 4TW.

Potterton & Martin always have some out-of-the ordinary bulbs in their list and the autumn 1994 catalogue reveals several 'specials'. *Biarum carduchorum*, a spectacular (well, to a *Biarum* enthusiast it is!) species with a dark velvety purple spathe (named after the Carduchi tribe in south-eastern Turkey and western Iran who gave Xenophon's army such a bad time in 401 B.C.). Also to be found in the list are *Colchicum burtii*, one of the small spring-flowering species like *C.triphyllum*, white or pale pink with dark anthers, *C.parlatoris*, a small autumnal one flowering before the many short narrow leaves appear, *Corydalis schanginii*, pale pink purple-nosed flowers with a very long tapering spur, *Crocus fleischeri*, one of my favourite spring crocuses which is white with many orange style branches, the small yellow conical-flowered *Fritillaria carica* subsp. *serpenticola* (I am no great Latin scholar but shouldn't this be *serpentinicola* meaning dweller of serpentine rocks?), *F.stribnyi*, and *Iris* 'Sheila Ann Germaney'; the last is another *histrioides* x *winogradowii* 'Major' hybrid and perhaps the most

attractive of the various named ones which are around in Britain. It has grey-blue flowers, veined darker, with a deep yellow line on the falls; I find this as vigorous as 'Katharine Hodgkin' and certainly different enough to make it worth having both. Potterton & Martin, The Cottage Nursery, Moortown Road, Nettleton, Caistor, Lincs. LN7 6HX.

Paradise Nurseries, mentioned above under the notes about the Chelsea Flower Show, are offering, as usual, some interesting 'bulbous' items in amongst their very miscellaneous array of plants. At present I am going through a 'Polygonatum period' and several of these and their relatives caught my eye: *P. stewartianum*, a whorled-leaved species with purplish flowers, and *P. verticillatum*, another one with leaves in whorls and very slender, offered in its white and purple-flowered forms; there is also the tall American *P. biflorum*, mentioned above under 'Stamps'. Related, is the genus *Disporum*, and, apart from the almost-too-vigorous but delightful *D. sessile* 'Variegatum', there is *D. flavens* with its long soft yellow bells and the dwarf *D. smithii*, creamy-green tubular flowers followed by orange berries. *Maianthemum biflorum* is a fine little plant but I have not seen *M. kamschaticum*, said to be larger in all its parts; both are on offer, as well as the familiar *Smilacina racemosa* and less-frequently seen *S. stellata* which is a much smaller plant with fewer starry white flowers in a short spike. It has been suggested that these should be 'sunk' into *Maianthemum*, but I suspect that at least for horticultural purposes we will find them around as Smilacinas for a very long time. Some *Uvularia* species and the fascinating *Tricyrtis* (several species and Japanese hybrids) complete the range of Liliaceous 'woody' plants (or perhaps I should say Convallariaceous in view of the splitting of Liliaceae).

Rupert Bowlby, mentioned above for his exhibit of Alliums at the Chelsea Flower Show, has quite a collection for sale in his 1994 catalogue, about 30 species and varieties in fact; he is also building up a good list of South African bulbs: 14 Lachenalias, 13 Gladiolus, several Babianas, Sparaxis and Tritonia etc., and *Cyanella orchidiformis*, a South African member of the Tecophilaeaceae. Rupert Bowlby, Gatton, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0TA.

And while on the topic of South African bulbs, BN subscriber Bert Cook has let us know that Rust-En-Vrede Nursery, P.O. Box 753, Brackenfell 7560, South Africa has been bought from Mr H.S. van Zijl by Mr A.M. Horstmann who has added his own stocks to the nursery. The resulting seed list represents a remarkable collection of S.African native bulbs, and here are a few statistics: 62 Lachenalias, 39 Romuleas, 17 Watsonias! Bert notes that, although the nursery does also sell some bulbs, he has had greater success starting from seed. The change of hemisphere means that by the time the

bulbs have readjusted to their new seasons, the seed-raised stocks have nearly caught up anyway.

Paul Christian's list usually contains some species which are almost, if not quite, impossible to obtain elsewhere and this year's catalogue is no exception. There is *Biarum ditschianum* (a crazy plant, if ever I saw one!) which has its spathe reduced to a small rim at ground level and totally eclipsed by the erect, fat, conical bright yellow spadix; scarcely an Award of Garden Merit plant, but fascinating; the lovely yellow and white version of *Corydalis schanginii*, subsp. *ainii*, several blue Asiatic *Corydalis* (*ambigua*, *fumariaefolia*, *turczaninovi*), *Crocus scharojanii* and its pale yellow 'flavus' form, *C.kosaninii*, and a new *Eminium* (an Aroid), *E.koenenianum*, from Turkey; there are lots of *Fritillaria* species, *Iris nicolai* and *I.rosenbachianum*, some of the rarer dwarf *Lilium* species, and a long list of mainly nursery-propagated Trilliums. P.O.Box 468, Wrexham, Clwyd LL13 9XR.

For those 'down under' (as a rugby enthusiast I am tempted to start calling it 'up top' in view of current performances in world rugby!), Ken and Lesley Gillanders in Tasmania are a good source of a wide range of unusual plants, including bulbs. They have the curious *Wachendorfia thyrsiflora*, a member of the Haemodoraceae, a family which is seldom seen in British gardens; this is a South African plant forming clumps of sword-shaped leaves and has metre-high inflorescences of irregular-shaped yellow flowers in spring/summer. *Patersonia glauca*, an Australian, is also clump-forming, a tough wiry plant with blue-violet flowers somewhat Iris-shaped with three large outer perianth segments. Both require greenhouse protection here in Surrey. However, *Astelia alpina*, one of the small rosette-forming alpine lilies (Liliaceae/Asteliaceae) can be quite successful outside on a peat bed in the U.K., as can *Diplarrhena latifolia* (Iridaceae). Both of these are Tasmanian natives; the latter is performing well this year in our garden, a lovely plant with broad Iris-like bright green leaves and large white flowers. I am interested to see that there is a form of this on offer, selected by the nursery and named 'Amethyst Fairy', which has the three smaller inner perianth segments heavily stained with purple and gold. Other items of interest are several more southern hemisphere monocots, such as *Milligania densiflora* (Asteliaceae), *Luzuriaga polyphylla* & *L.radicans* (Philesiaceae), *Herpolirion novae-zealandiae* (Anthericaceae) and *Blandfordia punicea* (Blandfordiaceae); also the spectacular South American climbing relative of *Alstroemeria*, *Bomarea kalbreyeri* (Alstroemeriaceae) which has large clusters of tubular red and yellow flowers. Woodbank Nursery, RMB 303, Kingston, Tasmania 7150, Australia.

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