



The Kirton Daffodil Variety Collection at RHS Garden Wisley in spring 2010 (photo Sharon McDonald/RHS)

production. At Springfields, the collection will be an educational resource for schools, gardeners and the general public – visitors to collections of daffodils are consistently amazed by the range of colour, size and flower form on display. Springfields has always had a role in building the public perception of bulb-flowers, and the Kirton Daffodil Variety Collection will certainly enhance this role.

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE DEFINITION OF DIVISION 9

Sally Kington

The current debate on division 9 is between two different ways of adapting it for change. These are expressed in Options 1 and 2 below. Supporters of both options stress the need to prevent confusion with division 3.

Following an international poll of daffodil groups and societies in 2007, conducted by the RHS Advisory Sub-Committee on Narcissus Classification, three out of 8 votes were for the principles of Option 1, two for Option 2, and three for no change at all. Because the return was small, however, and because there was no clear consensus, the new Register, which was just about to go to press (2008), retained the existing definition. Now the RHS is seeking further opinion.

The existing definition of division 9

Characteristics of the *N. poeticus* group: usually one flower to a stem; perianth segments pure white; corona very short or disc-shaped, usually with a green and/or yellow centre and a red rim, but sometimes of a single colour; flowers usually fragrant.

Options for change

● **Option 1** Characteristics of the *N. poeticus* group clearly evident: usually one flower to a stem; perianth segments pure white; corona very short or disc-shaped, usually with a green and/or yellow centre and a red or orange rim, but sometimes entirely red or orange; flowers usually fragrant.

Supporters of Option 1 wish to limit the division to the exact characteristics of the species in order to avoid confusion with division 3, including a cup colour of red or orange. (Underlined are their three amendments to the existing definition.)

● **Option 2** Characteristics of the *N. poeticus* group clearly evident: usually one flower to a stem; perianth segments pure white; corona very short or disc-shaped, not more than one-fifth the length of the perianth segments; usually with a green and/or yellow centre and a red rim, but sometimes of other colours; anthers usually set at two distinct levels; flowers usually fragrant.

Supporters of Option 2 wish to allow acceptance of some new hybrid characteristics into the division, including different colours, and yet still protect and maintain a clear distinction from division 3. (Underlined are their four amendments to the existing definition.)

Opinion

All those with an interest in division 9 daffodils are invited to give their opinion on which of the two options for change they would support, contacting the International Daffodil Registrar by 31 December 2011.

Email to sharonmcdonald@rhs.org.uk (with 'Div. 9' as the subject)

Post to Sharon McDonald, RHS Garden Wisley, Woking GU23 6QB, UK (with 'Div. 9' marked on the envelope)

Note Whatever the outcome of this consultation, the RHS will later debate three other changes – to replace the word 'group' with the phrase 'and related species', in order to avoid confusion with the special meaning of the word 'group' in another context (as 'cultivar group') – to remove

the phrase 'usually one flower to a stem', because multi-headed plants exist – and to remove the word 'usually' from 'flowers usually fragrant', because *N. poeticus* and related species are consistently fragrant

BACKHOUSE HERITAGE COLLECTION

Caroline Thomson

For a period spanning nearly 200 years, generations of the Backhouse family successfully bred over 900 varieties of daffodils, many of which are still popular today.

Through my mother's line, I am a direct descendent of the family, and it is this connection that has led to the formation of the Backhouse Heritage Daffodil Collection at the Rossie Estate in Fife, to celebrate the work carried out by William Backhouse (1807-1869), his sons CJ and RO Backhouse, his daughter-in-law Mrs RO Backhouse and his grandson WO Backhouse.

There is a good chance that daffodils bred by the family remain in cultivation. Can you help us find them?

If you have a named or indexed collection, or know that you have a daffodil bred by one of the Backhouse family, please contact: Brian Cunningham, Head Gardener, Rossie Estate, Ladybank, KY15 7UZ, or email brianjcunningham@yahoo.co.uk. A full list of daffodils we are looking for can be found at www.rofsie-estate.com

DISCARDED TREASURE

Jane and Rod Leeds

Five years ago we started to experiment with propagation from the sliced-off tops of *Galanthus* bulbs while twin-scaling. Looking back, we find between 30 and 50 per cent of these produced tiny bulbs in a few weeks. The method is to treat the tops as scales until you pot the infant bulbs in compost, when the productivity of the tops can be checked.

There is no particular species or hybrid that produces progeny more readily than any other in this way. It appears to be random, with even the more capricious selections like *Galanthus woronowii* 'Chandler's Green Tipped' and small



Young bulbs forming on the sliced-off tops (centre) of *Galanthus* 'Primrose Warburg' bulbs (photo Jane Leeds)

bulbs like *G. nivalis* Sandersii Group 'Ray Cobb' forming tiny bulbs on the tops. The most productive is often *G.* 'Primrose Warburg'.

RHS TULIP DAY 2012

The Royal Horticultural Society's Daffodil and Tulip Committee will host a day of lectures and discussions on Wednesday 11 April 2012 dedicated to the tulip. The event is planned to inform all gardeners and inspire them with this popular plant. Coinciding with the second day of the RHS London Flower Show, it will be held in the RHS Lawrence Hall, London SW1 between 10am and 5pm. Tickets should be booked in advance by telephone on 0845 260 5000 (£15 including refreshments).

- Anna Pavord will open the day with the history of the tulip
- Richard Wilford will talk about species tulips, from which all modern-day cultivars have been developed
- Christine Skelmersdale will start the afternoon session with a talk on modern tulips and growing them in the garden
- The final sessions will be concerned with exhibiting tulips.

Tulip displays and demonstrations will be held at the same time, as will an exhibition of paintings, making Tulip Day a must for all enthusiasts.