

DR. ABILIO FERNANDES

Nominee for the ADS Gold Medal

On October 19, 1906, Abilio Fernandes was born in the village of Macainhas, in the suburbs of the Portuguese city of Guarda. His childhood was spent in the country and by his 17th year he had completed his secondary or high school education.

With the encouragement of his parents he then entered the University of Coimbra to obtain his degree in the natural sciences. During his university years he gave particular emphasis to botanical subjects and the classification of higher plants. At the end of the four years he passed his examinations with high rank and consequently was invited to occupy the position of Assistant in the Botanical Institute of Coimbra. Then it was that he began to specialize in cytology, the study of the cell.

In 1929 the work of several prominent cytologists convinced Dr. Fernandes that many problems in plant relationships could be solved by a comparative study of the cells of plants belonging to the same plant group. To follow up this idea he chose the genera *Aloe* and *Narcissus*.

The report on his study of those two plant groups constituted the thesis for his doctor's degree in 1931.

Thereafter Dr. Fernandes' cytological studies were directed mainly to the genus *Narcissus* and several of his papers on the cytological identity of various daffodil species have appeared in print. No doubt all of you have seen one or another of them and the familiar diagrams of the chromosomes within the nucleus of the cell.

From this work has come the lists of chromosome numbers of the daffodil species and some of the older varieties. These chromosome numbers have in turn told us why daffodil breeders have had little or no success when attempting certain species or varieties crosses. Their chromosome numbers have not been compatible, so seed has not resulted. With that knowledge available to them the hybridists have been saved much unprofitable work.

It is pertinent to our consideration of this nomination that the American Amaryllis Society saw fit to recognize Dr. Fernandes' accomplishments by awarding him the William Herbert Medal in 1942. After that date he did not rest on his laurels and in 1946 *Herbertia* published still another of his papers on the same subject. Still more of his work will be found in Jefferson-Brown's book, *The Daffodil*, so well known to all of us.

In view of the foregoing the Executive Committee recommends that the Gold Medal be awarded to Dr. Abilio Fernandes of Portugal. His accomplishments are of a pertinent nature in the advancement of daffodils.

Approved April 25, 1963