



Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and Grant E. Mitsch

Photograph courtesy of The White House

GRANT MITSCH HONORED BY THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA

Emerson wrote that "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse-trap, though he builds his house in the woods the world will make a beaten path to his door." It might be paraphrased that if you grow better daffodils the world is sure to find you, even though you grow them in Canby, Oreg. However certain the result may be, a well-worn path is slow in the making, nearly 35 years in the case of Grant Mitsch.

Thirty-five years is a long time to persevere, a stern test of his faith in his ability to reach the goals he set for himself. A break finally came in 1958 when Aircastle was chosen Best-in-Show in London, the first American-bred flower thus to be honored. Daydream won an Award of Merit in 1963 and three years later won the coveted First Class Certificate as a show flower. Aside from a slowly growing demand for his creations, the first collective recognition of his work did not come until 1964 when the Men's Garden Clubs of America awarded Mr. Mitsch their Gold Medal. Belatedly, the American Daffodil Society conferred its own Gold Medal on him at Pasadena a year later.

The climax came on May 16, 1968, when the Garden Club of America bestowed its Medal of Honor on Mr. Mitsch in the presence of Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and nearly 600 delegates from all over the United States. The ceremony concluded the 55th annual meeting of the Garden Club of America which was held this year in Greenwich, Conn. Grant and Amy Mitsch, whom many of us had only recently visited at their home in Canby, came East for the occasion.

The Medal of Honor of the G.C.A. is possibly the most highly regarded of the numerous honors in horticulture offered in this country. In the recent past it has been given to Dr. Howard B. Tukey, Sr., Professor Emeritus and formerly Head of the Department of Horticulture at Michigan State University; Henry J. Hohman, nurseryman of Kingsville, Md.; Dr. Donald Wyman, Director of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University; Jan de Graff, nurseryman of Gresham, Oreg.; and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

The Awards Dinner was preceded by a reception for about 50 invited guests, including the seven awards winners, the current officers of the Garden Club of America, past presidents and officers-elect, and distinguished guests. Mrs. Johnson was escorted by Laurance Rockefeller, the chairman of the President's Citizens Advisory Committee on Natural Beauty and Recreation.

Mrs. Johnson was given the Frances K. Hutchinson Medal for conservation; in the field of horticulture, Melvin E. Wyant of Mentor, Ohio, received the Jane Righter Rose Medal; and Silvia Saunders of Clinton, N. Y., received the Distinguished Service Medal for her work in the study of chromosomes in peonies. As his award represented the highest honor that the Garden Club of America can bestow, Mr. Mitsch was the last to be called to the dais and heard the following citation read:

The MEDAL OF HONOR to GRANT EMERSON MITSCH
of Canby, Oreg.

The Medal of Honor is the Garden Club of America's highest award for service in Horticulture, and we are so pleased and proud to have Mr. Mitsch come all the way across the continent to accept his award tonight.

Mr. Mitsch has spent most of his life in Oregon, and by the time he was in his early twenties, he had his own collection of daffodils. Since then, he has continued to augment his outstanding collection, introducing several new varieties annually. His has been a lifetime devoted to the development of the genus *Narcissus*, and he is recognized, both here and abroad, as America's outstanding daffodil hybridizer.

He became especially noted for his pink daffodils, and for his charming and distinct reverse bicolors. His daffodil Daydream was the first American-raised daffodil to win a First Class Certificate at the Royal Horticultural Society in London; and his Aircastle twice was selected as Best-in-Show at the Royal Horticultural Society's great London daffodil show. In this country, many honors have been accorded him, including the Gold Medal of the Men's Garden Club of America, and the Gold Medal for Achievement from the American Daffodil Society.

Mr. Mitsch has made lasting contributions to the world of horticulture through his lifetime of daffodil research and practice. Amateur gardeners, professional breeders, fanciers and exhibitors, all over this country and abroad, have profited by his work. His insistence that the fruits of his labor must have health and vigor as well as beauty and distinction, has raised the standards of daffodil-growing everywhere. He has literally put America on the world daffodil map.

The quality of his productions and his own integrity in pursuing his career have made him respected and admired wherever he goes. The genus *Narcissus* has been forever enhanced by his devoted labors.

It is with the greatest pride that the Garden Club of America awards the Medal of Honor to Grant Emerson Mitsch.