

The Grant and Amy Mitsch Trophy
(Gripshover photo)

HOW THEY WERE MADE

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Two new trophies were offered at the National Show in Boston this spring, the Grant and Amy Mitsch Trophy and the Betty and John Larus Award. Both trophies are for seedlings exhibited by the hybridizer — the Mitsch Trophy for standard daffodils and the Larus for miniatures. I had the responsibility and pleasure of making them, and Mary Lou Gripshover has asked me to write an article describing how it was done.

Each trophy was individually designed and completely hand-crafted every step of the way. The making of them was a labor of love and a way of expressing my gratitude to all the hybridizers whose beautiful flowers have brought me so much joy.

First of all, the artist thinks about the design. Some sort of chalice seemed appropriate to honor Grant and Amy Mitsch because of their devout approach to life. I also wanted to express in some way that the award was for hybridizing, so a cover was made suggesting a daffodil, with stamens and pistil given prominence.

The bowl of the chalice was made first, being "raised" from a flat disc of heavy sterling silver eight inches in diameter. This process involves stretching and shaping the silver with a heavy ball-peen hammer. First the silver must be annealed (or softened) by heating it to 1200°F. I covered both sides with borax flux to prevent "fire-scale" and then used two acetylene torches (one in each hand) to heat it.



Marie Bozievich at work. (Knierim photo)

The first hammering was done on a flat anvil, going from the center of the disc in circles to the perimeter. Each hammer blow (and I *wbammed* it) stretched the silver and caused it to turn upward. This process was repeated many, many times, each time annealing the silver before hammering.

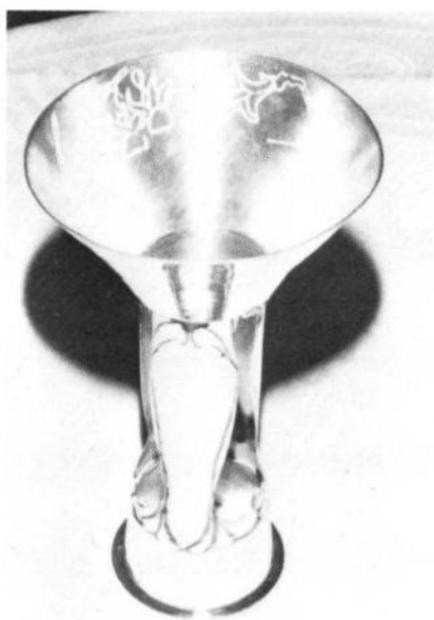
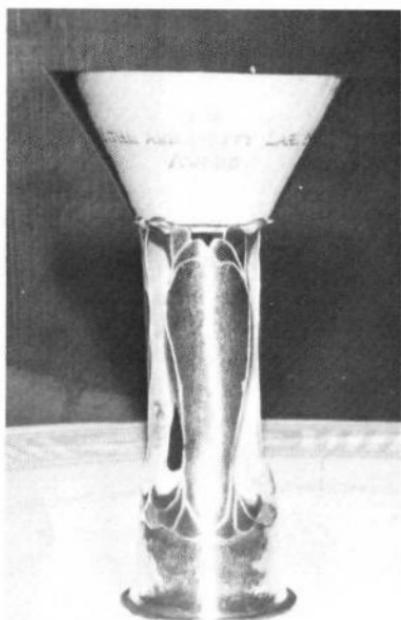
When the sides had curved up too much to be hammered from the inside, the bowl was placed on a curved stake and worked from the outside. I continued raising and annealing until the bowl was stretched to the desired shape and size. Then it was time to refine the shape and smooth out all the dents I had made. This process is called planishing and is done with a light hammer with a flattened peen. It is very time-consuming as the hammer blows must be placed with precision very close together. Each time I planished and annealed this bowl it took four to five hours, and it was planished six times after it was raised.



The cover was made from another disc of silver, smaller and lighter in weight. The daffodil shape was scratched on with a scribe (any other marks would disappear), then the disc was annealed and embedded in a flat pan full of pitch to hold it in place and support it while the petal shapes were pushed out from the back with dapping tools. The texturing of the background was done from the right side with a patterned nail point. A paper pattern was made for the cup of the daffodil and this was used to saw out the silver piece which was then bent into the proper shape and soldered to the center of the daffodil.

The stamens of the flower are represented by citrines, and the gold settings for them were cast from wax models in a centrifugal casting machine. (This is a fascinating process which I won't describe here.) The stigma is represented by a moonstone and a silver bezel setting was made for it. The settings were soldered to small silver tubes and the whole assembly soldered into the base of the cup. Finally a thick wire was soldered to the perimeter of the cover to strengthen it and to hold it in place on the bowl.

The stem of the chalice is made of plexiglas which was turned and shaped on a lathe by my good husband. The base is a shallow bowl (upside down) which was hammered and planished in the same manner as the larger, deeper bowl was done. Then silver collars to fit around the top and the bottom of the plexiglas stem were made and soldered to the bowls. The stem was anchored in the collars by drilling holes and fitting in small silver tubes as rivets.



The John and Betty Larus Award
(Gripshover photo)

The John and Betty Larus Award is different in spirit. In designing it, I was anxious to express some of the special qualities of miniature daffodils, particularly their daintiness and grace.

The cup was raised and hammered from a five inch disc of sterling, and the base was also formed by hammering. The three sections of the stem were sawed from sheet silver with a fine-toothed jeweler's saw, then shaped and planished.

The miniature species daffodils portrayed on the inside of the cup were etched in the following manner: the cup was painted all over with an asphalt based "resist," then the previously made sketches were transferred and scratched through the resist with a pointed tool. The cup was then immersed in a nitric acid bath and the acid ate away the silver where the protective cover had been scratched away. During the etching process bubbles are gently brushed away with a feather or soft brush, and frequent checks must be made on how deep the etch has penetrated.

After the etch was completed a ring was soldered to the base of the bowl to support the stem, then all the pieces were assembled and soldered together, along with a hammered ring at the bottom to add weight to the base.

When finally completed, both trophies were carefully gone over with fine emery cloth to eliminate scratches and then polished.

I hope that the members of the Society will enjoy these new awards and that many hybridizers will compete for them.