

AMERICAN DAFFODIL SOCIETY (ADS) 2017 GOLD MEDAL RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED!

Sacramento, CA – Nial Watson of Killinchy, Northern Ireland was awarded the 2017 American Daffodil Society Gold Medal on March 11, 2017 at the American Daffodil Society Convention in Sacramento, CA.



The Gold Medal of the American Daffodil Society may be awarded once each year in recognition of accomplishments of a preeminent nature in the advancement of daffodils. Nominees need not be citizens or residents of the United States. Our nominee, Nial Watson, has met the criteria and has been awarded the Gold Medal by unanimous vote.

Nial Watson's childhood was spent in Africa. From a young age he developed an interest in the environment, particularly plants and animals and their interactions. Nial's childhood interests turned academic; educated in the UK, his undergraduate degree is in Agricultural Science and his graduate degree is Tropical Animal Production and Health. Following school, Nial worked as a manager on a dairy farm in Ireland and spent several years in Sudan running a rural development project, which included two plant nurseries. This was followed by three years in Zambia as program officer with The Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N.

In 1988 Nial returned to live and farm in Northern Ireland. During this time a love of daffodils grew whilst working alongside the greatly respected hybridizer Sir Frank Harrison of Ballydorn Bulb Farm. Due to Frank's encouragement, Ringhaddy Daffodils was formed, incorporating Ballydorn Bulb Farm and later Brian Duncan Daffodils. The first crosses were made just before its formation and some seedlings have already achieved recognition with awards such as the American Daffodil Society's Innovator's Award and a candidate for the Royal Horticultural Society's Ralph B. White Award. Nial has won all of the ADS challenge awards for Standard seedlings including winning the Bender award for the best bloom in the Challenge section multiple times.

Nial is a member of The Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Daffodil and Tulip Committee and its successor, the RHS Bulb Committee; he is Chairman of the RHS Narcissus Classification and Advisory Committee; and he is a regular contributor to various daffodil publications.

Nial's first American Daffodil Society convention was in Pittsburgh in 1999. He has attended regularly since. We have enjoyed his presence and his flowers. He has registered forty cultivars so far with the RHS. He is well known for imposing Standards like 'Janet's Gold', but many intermediates such as 'Anna Panna' and 'Little Alice' are becoming mainstays in our shows. Nial's flowers are favorites welcomed back every year.

The American Daffodil Society has a tradition of honoring individuals who have contributed to the betterment of daffodils and the American Daffodil Society. Mr. Watson joins a prestigious group of individuals from around the world who continue their creative work towards the understanding and advancement of daffodils.