

HERBERTIA

PROPERTY OF
AMERICAN DAFFODIL SOCIETY



1946

Shul-

PREFACE

This NARCISSUS EDITION of HERBERTIA is appropriately dedicated to Guy L. Wilson, the eminent British *Narcissus* breeder, who received the 1946 HERBERT MEDAL for his achievements in his specialty. In the field of plant improvement there has existed for a long time a "One World" concept, and we in America are always gratified by genuine achievement in any part of the World. Mr. Wilson has favored us with an interesting autobiographical note, and a valuable article on *Narcissus* breeding.

The cover design featuring trumpet *Narcissus* is the work of our talented friend, J. Marion Shull.

Our friends, Dr. Abilio Fernandes and Mrs. Fernandes, of the University of Coimbra, Portugal, again favor us with an outstanding contribution; this time on a subject particularly appropriate for the NARCISSUS EDITION—"On the Karyo-Systematics of the subgenus *Ajax* of the genus *Narcissus*." This provides basic information of great value to all *Narcissus* breeders. We are again greatly indebted to Dr. Thomas W. Whitaker of an excellent translation into English from the original French.

We are also greatly indebted to the NARCISSUS COMMITTEE, and particularly to its energetic and able Chairman, Mr. Arno H. Bowers, for arranging for the valuable contributions on *Narcissus*, including in addition to the above, other excellent articles: Harold Alston writes on the daffodil in Australia; Mr. Bowers on the parents of hybrid *Narcissus*; Messrs. Reinelt, Powell, Culpepper, Ballard and Cooley on *Narcissus* breeding; Charles J. Gould contributes an article on *Narcissus* diseases, and E. P. Breakey, on the insect and mite pests of *Narcissus*; Mr. Hayward, Dr. Cooley, Miss Kell and Prof. Watkins write on *Narcissus* culture.

In connection with the NARCISSUS EDITION, the reader should also consider the article in HERBERTIA 1947 on the breeding of double *Narcissus* by "Ornatus," an article that is beautifully illustrated from photographs furnished by Mr. Jan de Graaff.

Important articles on the other amaryllids are also included in this issue: Mr. Claar contributes two articles on *Hemerocallis*; Mr. Saxton writes on the Wheeler daylilies; Mrs. Bright Taylor, and Mr. George Gilmer write on daylily culture, and many new daylily clones are described under registration of new clones; Mr. O. Mohr writes an historical note on *Amaryllis* culture in Denmark, 1940-1945; Mr. Hayward contributes an article on *Amaryllis* culture in Florida; Dr. Uphof gives a review of the genus *Habranthus*; Mrs. MacArthur writes on *Habranthus brachyandrus*. There are also articles by Prof. Watkins on the culture of crinums; Miss Lawrence on *Hymenocallis*; Mr. Hunt on *Lapagerias* and *Agapanthus*, and Jo N. Evans on various amaryllids.

The next issue of HERBERTIA will be the 2ND DAYLILY EDITION. It will feature the daylilies, but will also contain the usual articles on the other amaryllids.

Beltsville, Maryland,
September 2, 1947.

Hamilton P. Traub.



Herbert Medalist—Guy L. Wilson

GUY L. WILSON

An autobiographical note

I was born in a pleasant home within a mile of where I still live in the green countryside of County Antrim, Northern Ireland. I was much the youngest of a considerable family, none of whom were particularly interested in horticulture, so I always say that the love of Daffodils must have come into the world with me from some better place, as I cannot remember a time from my earliest childhood when I did not love them ardently. An old family retainer now in the eighty-sixth year of her age can tell me how, when as a child, I was in her charge on Sundays while the rest of the family went to Church, she had only to turn me out on the lawn on spring days where I spent the whole forenoon turning up the heads of the Daffodils one by one to gaze at them. I still have most vivid recollection of my delight in day by day watching the developing buds and opening flowers of a little colony of the dear old double yellow Daffodil that grew in the grass on the lawn on the sunny side of a clump of laurels: then came a morning when I ran out to see the beloved flowers, and found to my horrified anguish that they had almost all disappeared; I rushed back to the house in quite inconsolable tears, to find that a maid had been given permission to pick a bunch to take home on her day out.

My Mother greatly loved flowers but grew them on a limited scale, as the cares of managing a household did not leave her much time for gardening. We had a large walled garden which was almost entirely devoted to the cultivation of vegetables and fruit, and our old gardener had little time to help with the flowers. My Mother was also handicapped by a quite unjustified idea that only the very hardiest and commonest things could hope to thrive in our rather bleak wet and late climate.

In those days little attention had been given to Daffodils in Northern Ireland and the very few that were known to me were those that grew around my old home. We had the old double *Telamonius Plenus* or *Van Sion* and the English Lent Lily and *Nanus*, which we called respectively common double, common single and the dwarf Daffodil, growing in the grass. In the garden borders there were a few tufts of *Obvallaris*, the Tenby Daffodil, and large clumps of Double Incomparabilis *Golden Rose* which I think had come to us from some cottage garden under the name Rose of Sharon! Anyhow we called it the Rosy Daffodil: we also had *Poeticus Recurvus* in the grass, and the lovely sweet scented double white Gardenia flowered *Poeticus* blooming profusely in the garden; but in those days these to me were "single and double Narcissus," something a little different from Daffodils, but very close to them in my affections: I used to say that my favourite flowers were Daffodils and Narcissus.

I have a clear recollection of one day in my very early childhood asking my Mother, "Are there any white Daffodils?" to which she replied, "Yes, I think there are, though I have never seen them, and if you take great care of it I will let you look at a book with pictures of some;" whereupon she showed me the 1888 issue of William Baylor Hartland's "Original Little Book of Daffodils." I still regard that lovely old Catalogue as one of my greatest treasures. I can vividly remember my childish delight and excitement at the idea that white Daffodils really existed, and at seeing pictures not only of them but of other hitherto undreamed of beauties with white petals and yellow trumpets, such as *Empress*, *Horsfieldi*, *Grandis*, etc., as well as such things as *Emperor* and *Sir Watkin*. Many an hour I subsequently spent studying that old Catalogue and I probably owe much to its inspiration; at all events I think it is ever since that time that I have had a special love for white Daffodils.

My Mother used to order just a few bulbs from Hartland year by year; how I used to watch for the arrival of those parcels, and how the very sight and handling of bulbs thrilled me. At a very early age, perhaps six or seven, I wrote to Hartland and asked him for a photograph of himself! He sent the photograph, which alas I have lost, with a most charming letter, and this was followed in autumn by a very nice little collection of Daffodils of some twelve or more varieties which he sent as a gift. From then onward of course all my pocket money was saved up to spend on bulbs, and various kind friends gave me bulbs from time to time, so that by the time I had to leave home to go to boarding school I had quite a thriving little collection. In the early months of the year I used to write home to my Mother, eagerly enquiring how this or that particular bulb was progressing; sometimes I sent her plans of the beds, marking the exact spot where special things were growing. It was fortunate that Easter holidays coincided with the Daffodil flowering season.

One of the most outstanding memories of my early youth was when on leaving school I went with my parents for a trip to Southern Ireland at Easter time, and we called at Cork to see Mr. Hartland and his Daffodils. Hartland was a great enthusiast and was the pioneer of Daffodil growing in Ireland. He was contemporary with Peter Barr, the founder of the well known firm of Barr & Sons in London; the Daffodil owes much to these two men. What I remember most clearly of that day's visit was a big stock of Bicolor *Horsfieldi* in magnificent condition, and a glorious display of *Hispanicus Maximus*, or as Hartland called it in those days, *Maximus Superbus Longivirens*; and how I surprised Hartland by picking out a plant of *M. J. Berkeley* from amongst this *Maximus*. That incident makes me think that *M. J. Berkeley* is probably a sport from *Hispanicus Maximus*, as Hartland told us that that particular lot of *Maximus* had recently been imported from Spain. On that day also I had my first sight of *King Alfred*, of which Mr. Hartland showed us twelve plants with much pride, remarking that they were worth £60. It was of course the finest trumpet

Daffodil I had seen up to that time. I remember feeling much gratified on coming home from this trip to find that my own Daffodils, though much later than Hartland's, grew with at least equal vigour and strength, so that our County Antrim climate could not have been so bad as my Mother seemed to think.

Of course I always wished to make bulb growing or Daffodil growing my profession and often said so, but my Father could not believe that it was possible to make a living from growing Daffodils, and always rather discouraged the project, while my sister and brothers were somewhat bored by what they considered my Daffodil madness, and the Daffodils were sometimes referred to as "the Yellow Peril." So when on leaving school I was offered a small post in my cousin's Woollen Factory which was near my home I was glad to accept it, as it enabled me to live at my old home, which I loved, and go on collecting and growing Daffodils.

During all this time I had not realised the possibilities of cross fertilising Daffodils and raising new varieties from seed; but I took one of the English gardening papers, then known as "The Garden," and occasionally saw in it what were to me most exciting accounts of the Rev. G. H. Engleheart's new seedlings which were appearing at the Royal Horticultural Society's spring Shows, and at the Midland Daffodil Society's Shows.

When I was twenty-one years of age I went to England to visit Mr. A. R. Goodwin, a keen amateur Daffodil lover who then lived at Kidderminster, and accompanied him to the Midland Daffodil Society's Show at Birmingham, helping him with his exhibits. In those days the Midland Show was the Mecca of Daffodil lovers. There I met Engleheart, P. D. Williams, Ernest Crossfield, Henry Backhouse, Mrs. R. O. Backhouse and others as well as some Dutch growers. The seedlings shown by these raisers were a revelation to me: it was a great occasion and an enormous stimulus to my enthusiasm. I began hybridising at once: that was forty years ago, and I have been at it ever since and hope to continue as long as I live, if conditions in this increasingly uncertain world permit. In due course I began to exhibit myself, and was delighted to find that my Irish grown flowers from the outset more than held their own against those grown in England. Presently there began a friendship between that great breeder, and great gentleman, the Brodie of Brodie, and myself, and for more than twenty years until the time of his death I visited him in Daffodil time every season: what I owe to his generous help and friendship is beyond calculation.

People seeing my flowers at Shows soon began to enquire for bulbs, which I was very glad to sell at first in a small way so that I could afford to buy the better novelties for breeding and exhibiting. Gradually demand increased so that I found it necessary to print a small Catalogue; and in time I realised that in order to give my Daffodils and the business of distributing the bulbs the attention they demanded I should have to give up my job at the Woollen Factory, and did so: and so for a good many years Daffodils have been my life work, as indeed they should

have been from the outset. I need hardly add that they have been an unending source of intense interest and delight, and have also been the means of my forming many delightful friendships and links with people far and near. As I have many correspondents in New Zealand, including one or two friends who had been to see me here, I determined to go out in 1929 for their Daffodil season. This was possible, as my business was then quite small, and of course their flowering season is in August, September and October, so that I could go for that time of year and not miss the flowering season here. That trip will be a most delightful memory as long as I live. Nothing could exceed the wonderful kindness and hospitality which I experienced throughout the whole country. The New Zealanders are very keen gardeners and they are much favoured in their climate and certainly grow fine Daffodils. The country is beautiful beyond description, and not the least enjoyable part of my trip was seeing as much as I could of it, and this was made easy for me by many kind hosts who took me around in their cars.

Turning to my work in Daffodil breeding, a good many of my flowers have by this time got scattered abroad in the world, and it gives me a lot of pleasure to hear that some of them are giving a good account of themselves overseas as well as at home. One of the first of my own raising was the B4 *Mystic*, which was introduced in 1923 and gained an Award of Merit later. *Principal*, a very good all purpose Yellow Trumpet which gained a First Class Certificate in 1937, was first sent out in 1931. *Garron*, a giant Yellow Trumpet of great vigour and fine quality came out in 1924 and subsequently gained an Award of Merit. I had the honour of introducing Engleheart's magnificent White Trumpet *Beersheba* in 1923. It gained a First Class Certificate in 1926. Fine White Trumpets of my own raising are *Cantatrice* (Plate 285), which was introduced in 1936 and awarded a First Class Certificate in 1939; and *Samite* (Plate 286), introduced in 1930 and awarded an F. C. C. in 1940. *Kanchenjunga* (Plate 287), introduced in 1934, gaining an Award of Merit in 1940; and the giant *Broughshane* (Plate 288) which I introduced in 1938 and which gained an Award of Merit in 1943. In the Incomparabilis Division my brilliant yellow and red *Indian Summer* was introduced about 1940 and gained an Award of Merit in 1946. In the Barrii Division the very fine yellow and red *Chungking* and the red and white *Bravura* (Plate 289) are recent introductions which are first class exhibition flowers. Amongst Large Crowned Leedsii *Carnlough*, introduced in 1934, has had remarkable success in Australia and New Zealand where it has won many championships at Shows, while *Slemish*, introduced in 1930, was the leading flower for some years, gaining an Award of Merit in 1935 and F. C. C. in 1939. *Truth*, another very good pure white 4A came out in 1936 and got its Award of Merit in 1940. Amongst Small Crowned 4B Leedsii are several of the best things I have raised, notably *Cushendall*, which was sent out in 1931 and gained an Award of Merit in 1935, and *Chinese White* (Plate 290), first show in 1937 as a seedling flower. It gained an Award of Merit in 1946 and is perhaps the finest 4B seen up to date.