

# THE PETER BARR MEMORIAL CUP 2000



BRIAN S DUNCAN

The Peter Barr Memorial Cup is “awarded every year, in commemoration of Mr Peter Barr, on the recommendation of the Daffodil and Tulip Committee to someone who, in the Committee’s opinion, has done good work of some kind in connection with daffodils”.

**Mr William G Pannill** of Martinsville, Virginia is the worthy and popular choice for this prestigious International Award in the year 2000.

Bill Pannill has been growing daffodils for more than 40 years, entering his first daffodil show at age 28. He has been winning major prizes ever since. His introduction to daffodils was through a collection of bulbs given to him by his sister, who was active in the Garden Club of Virginia. The following spring, he was asked if he was going to enter the GCV show, and he replied that of course he was. He entered six blooms, and received five first place ribbons and one second place ribbon. He jokes that he thinks the judges were impressed because he had name cards with the flowers exhibited.

Mr Pannill began hybridizing in 1960, making “about four or five crosses.” The next year he reported making 90 successful crosses and 44 unsuccessful ones, involving every division except 6, 7, 8, and 11. He was well launched as a hybridizer and successful results were soon to follow. He became an enthusiastic exhibitor and obviously had a good eye for selection of flowers because in 1972 he won the coveted Gold Quinn Medal for a collection of 24 varieties. Remarkably, the exhibit consisted entirely of his own seedlings making him the first person achieve this feat. Included in that

24, still under number, were ‘Homestead’ 2W-W, and ‘New Penny’ 3Y-Y and both are still winning top prizes today. ‘Homestead’ was named a Pannill Award Winner in 1998 (as one of the most successful exhibition flowers in the United States of America.) His list of trophies and medals won at shows would fill several pages, and most were won with Pannill-raised flowers.

Over the years, Bill Pannill has registered and named almost 200 cultivars. Most hybridizers tend to specialise or to limit their activities to certain types or divisions of daffodils, but the Pannill registrations cover almost the complete range of types included in the Royal Horticultural Society’s official Classification of Daffodils. It is difficult to think of a division or a colour combination which is not graced by beautiful daffodils which have resulted from Bill’s imaginative and visionary crosses. The exceptions would be division 10 for bulbocodium hybrids, and division 11, the split-corona daffodils, for which Bill eloquently and humorously claims an intense distaste! If we add to the wonderful range of “standard” daffodils from the Pannill breeding program the several highly acclaimed “miniature” daffodils which he has raised, we have a most impressive output which must be as comprehensive and wide ranging as that of almost any other hybridizer from any era, whether amateur or professional.

Bill Pannill daffodils are widely grown by amateur enthusiasts and exhibitors in the United States and are becoming increasingly well-known in the British Isles and in the Antipodes. Several varieties have been taken up

by speculative growers in Holland and when available in sufficient quantity are likely to appear in the major retail catalogues of the world. This prospect pleases Bill Pannill as it is this potential for world-wide distribution which provides the opportunity for a plant to be perpetuated and gives great satisfaction and recognition to a plant breeder.

Pannill varieties which have been consistently successful at daffodil shows include 'Androcles' 4W-W, 'Crystal Blanc' 2W-GWW, 'Delta Queen' 2W-P, 'Homestead' 2W-W, 'Intrigue' 7Y-W, 'Indian Maid' 7O-R, 'Jingle Bells' 5W-Y, 'New Penny' 3Y-Y, 'Peggy White' 2W-W, 'Rim Ride' 3W-GYO, 'River Queen' 2W-W, 'Spindletop' 3W-Y, 'Virginia Walker' 1W-W, and the charming miniature, 'Junior Miss' 12W-Y. In 1999 seven Pannill cultivars figured in American Daffodil Society (ADS) awards seven or more times. They were 'Intrigue' 7W-Y, which topped the list by being included in 26 ADS-award winning collections; 'Homestead' 2W-W (18); 'New Penny' 3Y-Y (17); 'Williamsburg' 2W-W and 'River Queen' 2W-W (10 each); and 'Rim Ride' 3W-GYO and 'Chorus Line' 8W-Y (7 each).

When asked which of the daffodils he bred is his favourite, he replies that it seems to change annually, "but I suppose my favourite is 'River Queen'. .....My favourite show daffodil is 'Homestead', and I almost didn't select it. The cultivar which I hybridized of which I am most proud is 'Intrigue'. I think it has dual value for show and garden." Bill is not alone in his judgement of 'Intrigue'. It has been awarded the ADS Wister Award (similar to the AGM in Britain), and is now being grown on in Holland. His miniature 12W-W, 'Toto', received an AGM in 1997.

Mr Pannill's achievements are widely recognised in America and his awards and honours have been many. A past-president of the ADS, he is the recipient of both its Silver and Gold Medals – the Silver for service to the Society, and the Gold for creative work of a pre-eminent nature in the understanding and advancement of daffodils. He serves on the ADS Board

of Directors, and has served on the Board of Directors of The American Horticultural Society and The Callaway Gardens in Georgia. He was recently honoured by the Garden Club of America with its Eloise Payne Luquer Medal for Botany. In 1997, the ADS instituted the William G Pannill Medal in his honour. This medal recognises an outstanding American-bred show flower of the highest quality and was awarded to his 'Homestead' in 1998.

The Pannill influence extends far beyond the daffodils he has produced. His fair-mindedness, wit, and charm have endeared him to all and he has for years been the outstanding personality of the ADS. With a turn of phrase that is naturally funny, Bill has an enviable capacity to educate and to captivate an audience with humorous anecdotes. It is no surprise that he is an ever popular speaker at ADS conventions. In personal contacts, he has that rare capacity to make others feel good about themselves and whenever in his company, laughter is assured. He willingly shares his knowledge through lectures, articles in the ADS *Daffodil Journal* and the internet; he is an Accredited Judge of daffodils and is a certified instructor at ADS judging schools.

In 1998 my wife and I had the pleasure of spending several days as guests of Bill and Kit Pannill at their Palm Beach home. It was a wonderful and happy experience – so many common interests and such gracious hosts. Topics and activities included gardening and plants in general, daffodil breeding in particular, computer and internet activities (Bill as an expert, I as a beginner), a couple of games of golf, garden and nursery visits, church attendance and a most wonderful party for all those attending the Fall Board meeting of the American Daffodil Society in Florida. The collection of tropical plants and orchids, all grown to perfection in the beautifully landscaped and lighted garden, reflect the great love and feel for plants which both Bill and Kit Pannill so obviously possess in abundance.

Bill Pannill is a most fitting recipient of the Peter Barr Memorial Cup in the year 2000.