

Cyril Lafong wins the first SRGC Gold George Forrest Memorial



Cyril Lafong's prowess as a rock gardener and exhibitor has been recognised by The Scottish Rock Garden Club and by the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society. At the SRGC Early Bulb Display held in Dunblane's Victoria Hall we had a double ceremony. First SRGC President David Rankin congratulated Cyril on exhibiting plants which on 50 occasions had won The George Forrest Memorial Medal for Best Plant in an SRGC show. A few years ago Cyril gained his Silver Forrest Medal for winning 10 Forrest medals. Harold Esselmont paid for the first 6 silver Forrests. At the time, the Club thought 6 would be plenty as so few people won more than a couple. Only seven silver Forrest medals have been presented in the Club's 83 year history and of these four recipients have passed away. This emphasises just how magnificent is Cyril's achievement. Since winning his 50th Forrest medal at the SRGC show in Kincardine last spring he has gathered another 3. President David said in his tribute that by setting his own high standards for his exhibits he had raised the quality of plants in all the SRGC shows.

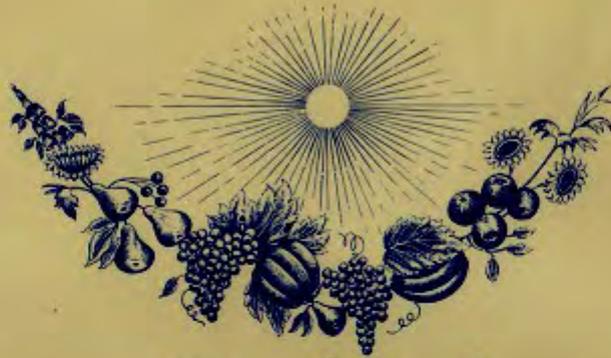
Next, Pam Whittle President of the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society presented Cyril with the Dr Patrick Neill Medal. After reading the citation President Pam gave Cyril his certificate medal and a copy of the citation. You can read both on the following pages.

The Early Bulb Display was chosen for the presentations as it is where the biggest number of SRGC members congregate to celebrate the end of winter. After Cyril thanked his wife Annielle for her patience and fellow members for



their encouragement and support the audience erupted in enthusiastic applause, pleased that Cyril's prowess had been recognised by the Caley as well as by the SRGC.





The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society

*Instituted 1809.
Incorporated by Royal Charter 1824 · Perpetuated by Royal Charter 1898*

The Dr. Patrick Neill Medal

Instituted 1851

Whereas the said Medal was instituted by the
Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society to
commemorate the bequest by Dr. Patrick Neill.
In appreciation of outstanding services, the
President and Council of the Society have conferred
the said Medal upon our right worthy

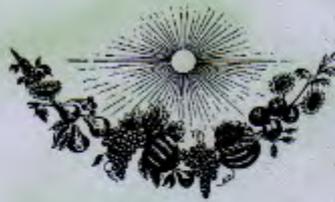
Cyril Lafong

*Given under the common seal
this 1st day of March 2016*

Paul Whittle *President*

Signed

Secretary



CITATION

Cyril Lafong

As a young boy Cyril's gardening was limited to helping tidy his parents' garden which involved picking up leaves and pruning. He got into alpines after post graduate studies, 30 years ago. He continued growing these plants throughout his career as a consultant medical microbiologist. Now retired he has even more time to work on his plants.

Cyril has taken the cultivation of some of the most demanding alpines to a new level in Scotland. The Scottish Rock Garden Club has a series of spring shows. A Forrest Medal, named after the famous Scottish collector and explorer, is awarded to the best plant in the show provided it reaches the appropriate standard. In March 2015 Cyril won his fiftieth Forrest, a unique achievement. He has since acquired a few more!

*The plants have mostly been raised from seed, he sows 200-300 pots per year, or cuttings and several are now large enough to fill 36 cm pans. He skilfully propagates and grows such difficult subjects as high altitude *Androsaces*, *Dionysias* (including *Annielle* raised by Cyril and named for his wife) and *Daphnes*, *Juno* and *Onocyclus* Irises, particularly good forms of plants such *Trillium rivale* Purple Heart and a range of *Cypripediums*. With bulbs he specialises in *Fritillaries* and has bulked up a notable three pan group of forms of the Chilean blue 'crocus' *Tecophilea*. He also exhibits exceptional plants in classes, often of three pans, for new, rare or difficult to grow plants frequently with plants that most gardeners have never heard of far less cultivated. Two spring shows are held jointly in the north of England with the Alpine Garden Society which has allowed him to add Farrer medals to his collection.*

Cyril's skill as a grower is unique in Scotland and only rarely equalled elsewhere in the UK, Yet he is a very modest man always willing to pass on his experience to others whether at plant events or via the SRGC journal and website. He has successfully put forward plants to the joint rock (SRGC/AGS/RHS) committee as the first stage towards an award that recognises horticultural merit. He also willingly provides some of his best plants for the club stand at Gardening Scotland.

1st March 2016





CALEDONIEN HORTICULTURELLE SOCIÉTÉ ROYALE

NEIL MEDAL
CYRIL LAFONG
2016

1865 1980