



THE

# FRITILLARIA

GROUP



The Fritillaria Group of the Alpine Garden Society  
Journal 25 Autumn 2009



**Editor:** Pat Huff

**Botanical advisor:** Martyn Rix

The Fritillaria Group welcomes articles, short notes and photographs – especially of plants in the wild—line drawings, and other material concerning Fritillaria.

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**Copy dates:** 1 May and 1 October

**Articles** are quicker and easier to handle if they are produced electronically, but typed and manuscript copy is also very welcome.

**Photographs** should be in the form of 35mm transparencies, or on photo CD. If possible, please send transparencies ahead of the copy to allow for scanning. Electronically produced images will only be accepted at a resolution of 300dpi.

The front cover shows an unusual form of *Fritillaria aurea*, and the back cover is *Fritillaria olgae*. Both photographs by Bob Charman, who also designed the covers.

## **STOP PRESS!!**

**The RHS Lily Group would like to invite members of the Fritillaria Group to their annual bulb auction, which will be held this year at the Birmingham Botanic Gardens, on Saturday, 10 October. Join us at 2.00 for tea and biscuits in the Oak Room before our wonderful bulb auction. No one knows what will turn up on the day, but there are always many treasures. All plant sales now advertise themselves as dealing in the “rare and unusual”, but the bulb auction really delivers. It’s a great auction with a very nice garden attached, so plan on spending time before or after in the gardens and in the famous Birmingham Botanical glasshouses. Directions and further information on the website:**

**[www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk](http://www.birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk)**

**Information on the Group’s officers and contact details can be found on our website:**  
**[www.fritillaria.org.uk](http://www.fritillaria.org.uk)**

# **MEETING 2009**

**SUNDAY, 25<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**

**AGM and Photographic Competition  
Hillside Events Centre, RHS Wisley**

**9.30 – 16.00**

**09.00 Staging of Photographic Competition**

**09.30 Coffee**

**10.30 Annual General Meeting**

**11.00 Short Talks**

**Peter and Penny Watts:  
“Chance Encounters with Mediterranean  
*Fritillaria*”**

**Jolyon Lea: “Finding Wild Bulbs”**

**12.30 Show open to public and lunch break**

**14.00 Dr John Page speaks on “Turkish Delights”**

**15.30 Raffle**

**16.00 Close of Meeting and Show**

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## FROM THE EDITOR

The articles in this number of the Journal demonstrate that not only are Fritillaria Group members doughty travellers when given the chance to see the genus in the wild, they can also be found all over the world. John Ingham's report from Iran throws a very different light on that troubled country from what we read in the daily papers. Doreen Mear, a member from New Zealand, provides an equally enthusiastic account of growing fritillaries on the other side of the world, despite the draconian rules on seed imports imposed by the New Zealand government. Maria Rubino, an Italian member, shares her enthusiasm for finding *Fritillaria collina* growing wild on Mount Cornata in Grosseto province. There have been a number of articles in the last few Journals on what fritillaries can be grown outside in Britain. Konstantin Aleksandrov's article on growing fritillaries in the savage climate of a garden near Moscow puts our efforts to shame with the mind-boggling number of species he grows. Finally, Bob Charman and Doug Coldwell prove that you don't have to travel further than Suffolk to find fabulous fritillaries in the wild.

## A WEED INFESTED HOLIDAY

*By John Ingham*

Last April, Jill White ran her sixth tour to Iran in search of fritillaries, with a lot of input from Bob Wallis in terms of where to go and what to look out for. We were seven altogether, plus Ishmael, the driver we have had in previous years and who knows and tolerates our ways.

The tour's emphasis was the southern Zagros roughly between Esfahan and Shiraz. Not a great deal had been reported from the area, other than *Dionysias*. Was this because there was nothing bulb-y there or had it simply not been adequately explored?



A weed. Photograph by John Ingham.

In sum, south of Esfahan there is not a lot in the way of fritillaries, other than the ubiquitous *F. imperialis*. One becomes almost blasé about them. We did find some *F. gibbosa*, which I will come back to later, some *F. persica* and one *F. chlorantha* in a rock pocket where it had escaped the goats. Otherwise such fritillaries as we did find were further north. By contrast the *Dionysias* were everywhere, once you knew where to look. But then they were not always easy of access, high up on sheer cliffs. We saw at least twelve *Dionysias* as against a total of eight *Fritillaries*. This prompted some comments about weeds, on the basis that a weed is a flower where you don't want it. Weeds or not, some of them were truly spectacular, best of all *D. archibaldii* in various shades of pink, both down by the Karun river and high up on a wind-swept pass. That wind made photography above the precipitous void more than a little interesting!



Weeds and fritillaries. Photograph by John Ingham.



*Fritillaria gibbosa*. Photograph by John Ingham.

What was depressing was to see the level of over-grazing of the hillsides by the nomads' flocks. Some slopes looked as if they could probably never regenerate even if one could keep them sheep and goat free for a decade. What, if anything, is planned to do about this I don't know.

Although flowers were our main focus, we did not neglect our cultural education, with visits round Esfahan and to Persepolis, close by Shiraz. Three of our number decided to skip the joys of Esfahan and set off along the road to Shahr-e-Kord, where they found a pure white form of *F. gibbosa*. Thereafter we did find some more whitish forms, with slight pink speckling, but never a clear white again. Elsewhere we found pale yellow *F. zagrica* and a buttercup yellow *F. reuteri*. On a previous year we saw a yellow form of *F. gibbosa* too, but not on this trip. South west of Aligudarz we confirmed a new location for *F. oliveri*, thus extending its known range considerably. So even with so few Fritillaries, we did have some discoveries ... and it is always good to get back to Iran and its magnificent scenery



## THE NEW ZEALAND FRITILLARIA GROUP

*By Doreen Mear*

The New Zealand Fritillaria Group was founded some ten years ago by Joan Whillans, now living in Kaiapoi near Christchurch, but formerly the owner of the highly regarded Thirlstane Nursery. Joan says she originally thought maybe ten or twenty people would be interested in joining an informal group devoted to frits so was astonished when the numbers soon topped 100, peaking at around 150, most of them from New Zealand's South Island. The group now has a new chairperson as Joan handed over the reins last year to concentrate on her flourishing floristry business, not to mention her frits and her garden, of course.

The aim of the group was to pool our knowledge of frits and experience of growing them through a regular newsletter and seed exchange, with a meeting once a year, to include a speaker and garden visits wherever possible. We are lucky to have living locally knowledgeable experts and good growers like Professor John Lovis and Joe Cartman, whose names will be familiar to many of you, so we have benefited enormously from their willingness to share their expertise.

Our seed exchange is small but well supported since we supplement members' donations by purchasing seed from Ron Ratko, Vlastimil Pilous and Jim and Jenny Archibald. Sadly we are bound by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAF) regulations, which list only 83 species that we are allowed to import. These rules were introduced in 1998 to prevent the import of plants which may prove to be noxious weeds, like the hawkweed, gorse and wild rose brought by the early settlers. Personally I wouldn't mind at all if *Ff. gibbosa* and *alburyana* went rampant in my garden; chance would be a fine thing, but they're not on the permitted list. Unfortunately with the number of permitted species remaining static, it's difficult to keep up the momentum of the group, so our current membership is down from its peak somewhat.

As for growing, most of us down here in South Island manage to grow the common species – *meleagris*, *pontica*, *pallidiflora*, *pyrenaica*, *camschatcensis*, etc. – outside in the border with no trouble. A friend in a rather milder area has edged her long driveway with a ribbon of *Fritillaria affinis* ‘Sunray’ which looks absolutely stunning in flower. Where I live in Wanaka we have a continental climate with cold dry winters and hot dry summers, so all but the tough species mentioned above are confined to pots, which can be protected, shaded or whatever as necessary. The last head count totalled some 30 biggish pots of frit bulbs, 22 smaller pots and 84 seedling pots, plus a large envelopeful of seed packets in the fridge awaiting sowing. One afternoon I took my non-gardening/houseplant-sitting friend to visit another local frit group member and when she saw a similar array of pots, she exclaimed in shocked disbelief, “There’s another lady with the same disease as you!” Well, yes, there are currently 112 of us!

I struggled when I first came to New Zealand to find anything similar to the growing media I used in the UK. Nursery staff looked blank if I asked for ericaceous mix for rhododendrons for example, and the standard garden centre seedmix was solid black peaty gunk that asphyxiated anything sown in it. It took a few years before I found a supplier of good open seedmix and grit. Now following on from the article on growing in Seramis in your latest bulletin, you’ll see me in the supermarket perusing the smallprint on sacks of our local cat litter, and googling “attapulgate” to see if it’s likely to do the trick! I’ve set up some test pots so I’ll let you know in 3 or 4 years’ time how I get on. In the meantime, since I don’t think there’s any chance in my lifetime of getting the beautiful new Chinese species for example over here, I’ll just keep on drooling over your bulletin as it drops in the mailbox!

*P.S. Doreen Mear (aka Hinchliffe) was a UK member living in West Yorkshire until she emigrated to New Zealand in 2000. She is currently secretary of the NZ Fritillaria Group. Some of you may know Doreen’s sister and brother-in-law, Elaine and Roger Lynch, who are members of the Fritillaria Group.*

## **THE SEED EXCHANGE**

*By Pat Craven*

As I reported in the last Journal, last year's seed exchange was disappointing – the quantity and variety of donations was down on previous years, and the demand for seed was also less, perhaps because there were fewer “desirables”. So, if you have seed or bulblets to spare, please send a donation to the exchange.

The majority of participants in the seed exchange now have email, and I send out the list to all members for whom I have an email address. Again, a printed list will be sent only to those members who request one. So please:

- Ensure that I have your up to date email address
- If you want a printed list, write or telephone to request one.

There is generally no way of knowing that an email has gone astray (or a letter, for that matter). I expect to send out this year's list by post on Saturday 29th August, and to send the email lists out on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August. If you don't get your list in the week commencing 31<sup>st</sup> August, please let me know.

In order to make the timings work, please send all donations to reach me by Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August.

Some members (even when they request bulblets) still send an ordinary envelope with inadequate stamps, or else send no s.a.e. at all. Please send padded envelopes with the correct postage.

Pat Craven, 24 Leven Road, Yarm TS15 9JE

email [cravens@ukgateway.net](mailto:cravens@ukgateway.net)

Tel: 01642 780109

## **ARE SERAMIS AND CAT LITTER THE SAME THING?**

*By Paul Cumbleton*

After my article on Seramis, various people have come up to me and said they were using cat litter as a substitute for Seramis because “it’s the same thing”. This idea arose from discussions in forums on the web resulting from things I said in the Wisley Log that I write. I thought I should clarify this issue.

Cat litter is made from a variety of substances by different manufacturers and only some of these are of any horticultural use. The only two I know for sure that may be used are Tesco Premium Cat Litter and Sophisticat PINK. These two products, along with Seramis and the products known as Biosorb, Ultrasorb and Moler are all made from a raw product called moler clay. All these products have been tried by various people and found to have a variety of horticultural uses. Please note however, that although made from the same starting material they are not all exactly the same product – they vary in how hard they are, (resulting from varying temperatures during manufacture), in how absorbent they are and in the range of particle sizes they contain. They are therefore not all exactly the same thing and they may vary in their performance when used for horticultural purposes. My own experience has been only with Seramis, so I cannot guarantee that if you use any of the others that you will get the same results. But it is probably well worth trying because cat litter (as long as you buy the right sort!) is much cheaper than Seramis. If you experiment with this or any of the other products mentioned, please do write in and share with us all your results.

Paul Cumbleton

(You can read more about this in my Wisley Log no 19 on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at <http://www.srgc.org.uk/wisley/2008/100908/log.html> and in discussions relating to it on the SRGC forum)

## **RELAUNCH OF THE WEBSITE**

*By Paul Cumbleton, Webmaster*

I have spent the past few months creating a new-look website for the Group. I hope to be able to have it ready by the early autumn. It will be at the same web address as before, so check it occasionally over the next few weeks until you find the new site there. As well as changing the look of the site, I have tried to make it much more user-friendly with easy navigation. In particular there is a much improved picture gallery with larger pictures. Once the new site is launched, please do try it out and let me know if you like it, or if you have any suggestions for future improvements. I would particularly appreciate it if you would let me have more photographs – there are quite a few species of which we do not have any pictures, and many others where the ones we have are not so good. Very few of the pictures from the original website were available to me to use in the new site – if you were the original photographer of any of these pictures, could you send me them afresh please?

## **KATH DRYDEN, VMH**

*By Bob Charman*

It was with sadness that we learnt of the death of Kath Dryden on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, after a short illness. From the very first, Kath was always one of the Frit Group's most enthusiastic supporters. She spoke about cultivation at our first meeting, but unfortunately this was cut short by a heavy nose-bleed. She always encouraged and shared her enthusiasm and expertise with everyone, and until recently she was at every meeting with her plants. Following the death of Erna Franks, Kath had agreed to become the Frit Group President, but she never took up the position. Kath had a wealth of knowledge and experience, and her contribution will be missed by the Group at future meetings.

## FRITILLARIA GROUP PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

This article appeared in the last number of the Journal, but it is worth repeating since we want the first competition to be a success. For the 35mm slides, each entrant is restricted to only one slide per class, but for the six print classes, competitors may enter up to three prints per class. Please remember to put your name on the back of each print and slide. Staging will be from 9.00 to 10.30 am at the Autumn Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October.

### Classes

- 1 A group of *Fritillaria* 35mm colour slide
- 2 A single *Fritillaria* plant 35mm colour slide (the whole plant)
- 3 A close up of a *Fritillaria* 35mm colour slide
- 4 A group of *Fritillaria* up to A4 print
- 5 A single *Fritillaria* up to A4 print (the whole plant)
- 6 A close up of a *Fritillaria* up to A4 print
- 7 A group of *Fritillaria* print size up to 7 x 5 inches
- 8 A single *Fritillaria* print size up to 7 x 5 inches
- 9 A close up of a *Fritillaria* size up to 7 x 5 inches
- 10

### Rules

- 1 Plants may be in the wild or in cultivation
- 2 You may enter up to 3 prints in classes 4 to 9
- 3 You may only enter one slide in classes 1 to 3
- 4 Slides and prints should be labelled with your name

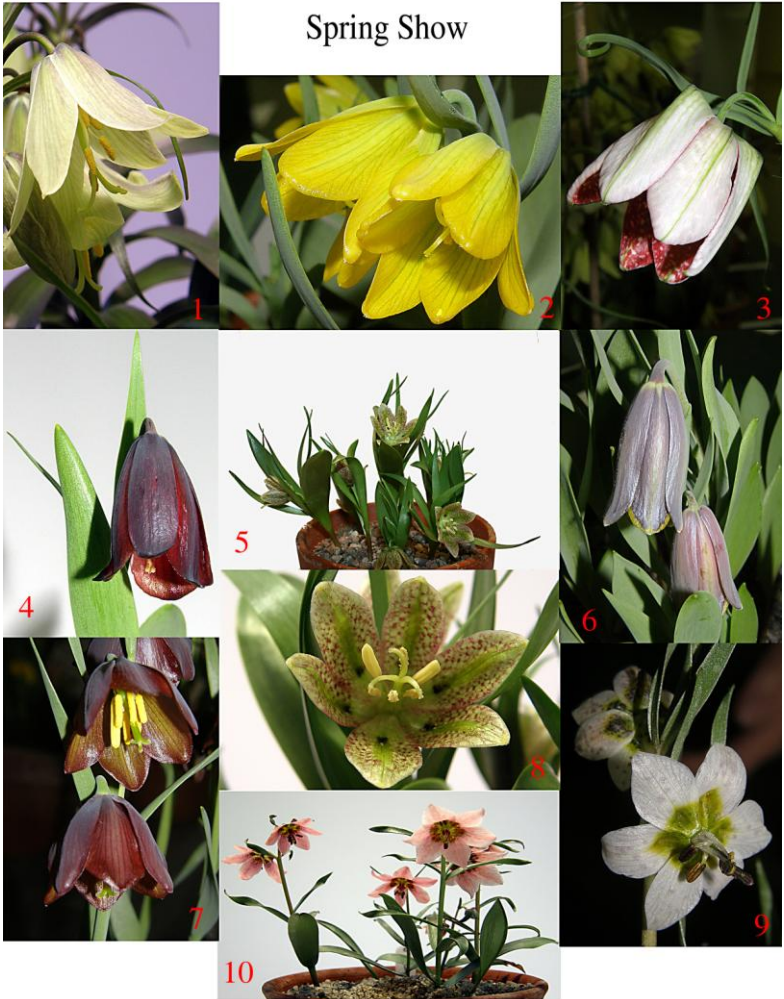
Entries can be brought on the day or sent to Mr P Roseo, 49 Chipstead Way, Woodmansterne Village, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 3JM with a S.A.E. All entries must be accompanied with the NAME and ADDRESS of the competitor, so they can be returned after the meeting. PLEASE SUPPORT THIS NEW VENTURE .

**A SELECTION OF PLANTS AT THE  
2009 SPRING SHOW**

*Photographs taken by Bob Charman*

1. *Fritillaria raddeana*
2. *Fritillaria caria* subsp *serpenticola*
3. *Fritillaria walujewii*
4. *Fritillaria caucasica*
5. *Fritillaria nova*
6. *Fritillaria pinardii*
7. *Fritillaria obliqua*
8. *Fritillaria nova*
9. *Fritillaria karelinii* x *gibbosa*
10. *Fritillaria gibbosa*

A Selection of Plants at the  
Spring Show





## **FRITILLARIA MELEAGRIS IN SUFFOLK**

This spring two of our members took cameras to Suffolk to record one of the great natural displays of the English season. Here are their observations and their photographs.

### **CLOSER TO HOME**

*By Doug Coldwell*

Like many members who like to grow frits, I enjoy trips to see the plants in their natural habitat. It often surprises for instance to see *Fritillaria crassifolia* in its boulder screes or *F. pinardii* in the snow melt mud when pots with gritty JI seem to suit most species in cultivation.

In mid April I went to Suffolk to see one of the *Fritillaria meleagris* sites in the upper Deben valley. I had visited it some ten years previously and seen the field with the plants scattered about. This year (2009) on approaching the field a haze of muddy magenta was apparent from a distance rather like the effect of agricultural weedkiller that farmers use at this time of year. Reaching the site revealed what must have been millions of the flowers growing and competing amongst the rank herbage of grasses and meadowsweet .

After the initial euphoria at the sight a question came to mind. How had the massive increase in plants come about, seed or vegetative means? In the garden seed germinates freely only on open ground. The field had no cleared areas. All the flowers were either white or deep purple, with none of the intermediates that I get in the garden. (Whites were probably just two percent of the population). So it seems to me that seed is not a factor in the health and abundance of this wild population, surprising considering the amount that this species produces and its easy germination. I'm now curious to see other sites for this species, especially those in places where the plant is truly native.



Snakeshead lily  
meadow at Framsdan,  
Suffolk, in April  
2009:

*Fritillaria meleagris.*

Photographs by  
Doug Coldwell.

## “A WARM SUNNY DAY IN APRIL...”

*By Bob Charman*



What better way to spend a warm, sunny day in April than to photograph a wild Fritillary meadow? I was asked by a friend if I would like to join him to have a look at this phenomenon; needless to say, I jumped at the opportunity. He took me to the Fox Fritillary Meadow owned by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, which was quite amazing. There were swathes of Snake's Head Fritillary in the usual mauve, but also some white forms, as far as the eye could see. Fox Fritillary

Photograph by Bob Charman.

Meadow is a fragment of ancient meadow, and is the largest of four remaining Snake's Head Fritillary sites in Suffolk. The plants thrive in a soil that is waterlogged in winter, and there are displays of up to 300,000 Frits in April/May. In early July after the seeds have set, the meadow is mown for hay and then grazed by sheep to help control grasses that would otherwise smother the flowers. There were originally eighteen Fritillary sites in Suffolk, but most have been destroyed by drainage or ploughing. There are two other reserves in Suffolk where Fritillary can be seen in profusion – Martin's Meadow and Mickfield Meadow, both also managed by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Details of the locations for anyone able to visit can be found on their website: [www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk](http://www.suffolkwildlife.co.uk).

## A LETTER FROM ITALY

Dear friend of the Fritillaria group

I send you a short account of our adventures in researching *Fritillaria tenella* (or *orsiniana* if you prefer or *orientalis*). On April the 25<sup>th</sup> we climbed the Cornata mountain inside the natural preserve of the Cornata e Fosini, province of Grosseto Italy. We were at about 900m above sea level when on the side of the mountain exposed to east just beside the path, we “met” two flowered *Fritillaria tenella* with two flowers each. There were no other fritillaries in flower in the vicinity. We continued searching around but we were able to find only two others actually in flower.

Only 4 but we were happy. Our happiness increased when we met a group of people who were climbing there too, and we could show them “our” plants, sharing with them the joy of seeing a rare fritillary. In 15 days’ time we will climb up there to get the seeds (what do you think, it will be too soon?).

Best regards,  
Maria Rubino

From the left,  
clockwise, Maria  
the researcher,  
Alessia the  
photographer, Perla  
and Josephine





*Fritillaria collina*  
at 900m on the  
Coronata  
mountain,  
Grosseto  
Province, Italy,  
25 April 2009.

Photographs by  
Alessia Rubino.

## MY EXPERIENCE OF GROWING *FRITILLARIA* IN A GARDEN NEAR MOSCOW

By Konstantin Aleksandrov

Translated by John Page

I began to take a great interest in growing plants about 25 years ago. My parents used to own a plot some 40 kilometres to the north-west of Moscow where they grew flowers, but sadly the range was very limited. The conditions were not particularly favourable. The garden was in a low-lying spot, open to the north-west, with a fairly dense wood to the south-east. As a result, in the spring and autumn there were frequent frosts and in winter the temperature was often 5 degrees Celsius below that in Moscow. As I said earlier, we were very much involved with flowers, but it was difficult to get hold of anything really new and interesting. For the most part, you acquired your plants from fellow enthusiasts. Often they themselves did not know what they were. In the early days I was not all that interested in plants, I simply helped my parents, but gradually I developed an interest in new and unusual things, and so it came about that I got hooked on bulbs. Narcissus were my first passion. I collected about 70 different ones, covering virtually every section. Next, I became mad on hyacinths and after that erythroniums and corydalis. *Erythronium sibiricum* and *Corydalis baracteata* were everywhere in the garden. Finally, it was the turn of *Fritillaria*. Up to 24 species of *Fritillaria* grew in the territory of the former Soviet Union, two of them in the area around Moscow even, as I later realised. *Fritillaria imperialis* was my first species. Actually, it bore the name of a Lily when I first grew it. It did not flower the following year and the year after that it was killed by the frost. I knew what species it was, though, and I tried to acquire others. I

also realised that I had not chosen the right place to plant them. The bulbs were dug up and kept in a warm place in the summer. They quickly flowered. Another fritillary appeared in the garden – the white form of *F. meleagris*. Subsequently, I was able to buy the ‘Lutea’ form of *F. imperialis*, dug up at the worst possible time, whilst it was in flower.

Next, the first *Fritillaria* from the flora of the USSR appeared, *F. collina*. Of course, a lot of mistakes were made in its cultivation. There was very little written about it, accounts were contradictory and we had virtually no experience with it – hence failure.

But I became more experienced and my collection increased. I was able to meet other enthusiasts and friends who were making trips abroad. At the end of the 1990s a number of fritillaries became available commercially. There were, however, a lot of problems with identifying these plants, so, for example, bulbs bought as *F. latifolia* turned out to be *F. grandiflora*, and in place of *F. kurdica* we had *F. maximowiczii*. Suspicions also arose in connection with material from China, e.g. incorrectly named bulbs of *F. maximowiczii*. What arrived under that name was conspicuously different from what I was growing. A friend of mine said that most likely I had got *F. dagana*, not *F. maximowiczii*, though he had only seen *dagana* in a herbarium. Possibly we’ll be able to clarify the matter this summer, because I now know who has the real species.

At present I am growing the following outdoors:

|                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Fritillaria acmopetala</i> Boiss | <i>Fritillaria aurea</i>           |
| <i>Fritillaria affinis</i>          | <i>Fritillaria bithynica</i>       |
| <i>Fritillaria alburyana</i> Rix    | <i>Fritillaria bucharica</i> Regel |
| <i>Fritillaria armena</i>           | <i>Fritillaria camtschatcensis</i> |

*Fritillaria carica*  
*Fritillaria caucasica*  
*Fritillaria collina*  
(*Fritillaria lutea*)  
*Fritillaria crassifolia*  
*Fritillaria davisii*  
*Fritillaria glauca*  
(‘Goldilocks’)  
*Fritillaria graeca*  
*Fritillaria grandiflora*  
*Fritillaria guissichae*  
*Fritillaria hermonis* subsp.  
*amana*  
*Fritillaria imperialis* L.  
*Fritillaria involucrata*  
*Fritillaria kotschyana*  
*Fritillaria latifolia*  
*Fritillaria maximowiczii*  
*Fritillaria meleagris* L.

*Fritillaria meleagroides*  
*Fritillaria michailowskyi*  
*Fritillaria minuta*  
*Fritillaria pallidiflora*  
Schrenk  
*Fritillaria persica*  
*Fritillaria pinardii*  
*Fritillaria pontica*  
*Fritillaria pudica*  
*Fritillaria pyrenaica*  
*Fritillaria raddeana* Regel  
*Fritillaria ruthenica* Wikstr.  
*Fritillaria sewerzowii* Regel  
*Fritillaria stenantha* Regel  
*Fritillaria ussuriensis*  
*Fritillaria uva vulpis*  
*Fritillaria verticillata*  
*Fritillaria whittallii*  
*Fritillaria zagrica*

Apart from the above-mentioned, I have *Fritillaria* which I can’t identify for certain, name *FF. olgae* and *regelii*. These were received from Uzbekistan, from various sites. The differences concern height and the number of flowers. For that reason, for the moment I can’t say precisely whether it is a question of different species or whether we are dealing with variations within the confines of a particular species. Last year I was looking into differences between the flowers of various examples of *Fritillaria stenantha*. Some of them had been received from Uzbekistan and were clearly not *F. stenantha*. We suspect that amongst the *F. stenantha* bulbs there were a couple of *arianum* or *gibbosa*. That’s quite odd, because our works of reference don’t include Uzbekistan in the distributional range of these species.

There are a few *Fritillaria* received recently which are as yet unidentified. In all probability these are *FF. cirrhosa*, *delavayi* and *thunbergii*. There are also some species which haven’t



flowered yet. We can't even guess what they might be. From my experience of growing frits it is possible to say the following:

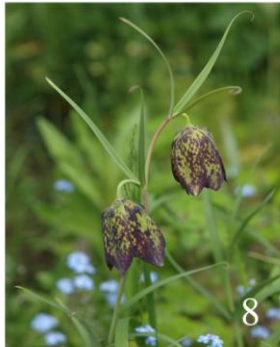
A. The majority are very undemanding and easily withstand extremely severe winters, e.g. *FF. grandiflora*, *meleagris*, *imperialis*, *collina* (*lutea*), *caucasica* and even *acmopetala*. During the 2002/3 winter they withstood frosts down to minus 20 degrees Celsius for weeks on end out in the open. Under a decent covering of snow, they coped with 30-35 degrees below. That was one of our severest winters in living memory. We get comparable winters only every 10 – 15 years. Only a limited range of species demand special treatment. I'd include here *FF. bucharica* Regel, *olgae*, *persica*, *pudica*, *raddeana* Regel, and *stenanthera*. I dig these up in summer and keep them in a dry place. *Fritillaria persica*, no matter what we try, does badly in the Moscow area. The double form of *F. camschatcensis* has also behaved capriciously. I haven't been able to keep it going for any length of time.

B. As far as propagation goes, we can divide frits into three

1. No problems with *FF. imperialis* and *meleagris*.
2. Those which form offsets/rice grains: *FF. acmopetala*, *affinis*, *alburyana*, *grandiflora*, *latifolia*, *maximowiczii*, and *pudica*.
3. Those which increase only by seed: *FF. bucharica*, *caucasica*, *collina*, *meleagroides*, *olgae*, *raddena*, *ruthenica*, *sewerzowii*, *stenanthera* and *zagrica*.

With the aim in mind of adapting my plants to local conditions, I try to grow my frits from seed. All my frits grow outdoors. I try to create for them conditions which approximate to what they enjoy in the wild, both in terms of light levels and soil. To increase their chances of successful overwintering, I cover them with a good blanket of dry leaves and fir branches whilst the frosts last. These are removed when the thaw comes in March or early April. Otherwise the leaves start to decay.







- 1 *Fritillaria kotschyana grandiflora*
- 2 *Fritillaria regelii* \*
- 3 *Fritillaria imperialis* type *argenteovariegata*
- 4 *Fritillaria bucharica*
- 5 *Fritillaria olgae*
- 6 *Fritillaria aurea* \*\*
- 7 *Fritillaria alburyana*
- 8 *Fritillaria cirrhosa*
- 9 *Fritillaria gussichiae*
- 10 Konstantin the proud grower
- 11 *Fritillaria caucasica*
- 12 *Fritillaria stenantha*
- 13 *Fritillaria collina*
- 14 *Fritillaria pallidiflora*

\* This is the first time I have seen this particular Frit:  
If any of the members have photos of this flower,  
I would be very grateful if you could send them to me for  
the image library.- Bob Charman

\*\* Please note this unusual colour form.



£3.50

