

The Meconopsis Group was appointed the International Cultivar Registration Authority (ICRA) for the genus *Meconopsis* in November 2002. We also have responsibility for Parameconopsis (i.e. the cultivars of what was formerly known as *Meconopsis cambrica*). There are about 80 to 90 ICRA's throughout the world some of which have responsibility for more than one genus. ICRA's are appointed by the Special Commission for Cultivar Registration which is a sub-body of the International Society for Horticultural Science.

The aim of Registration is to promote uniformity, accuracy and stability in the naming of agricultural, forestry and horticultural plants. ICRA's must commit themselves to follow the latest edition of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants (ICNCP)*. This *Code*, prepared by the International Commission for the Nomenclature of Cultivated Plants, outlines the guiding principles on which the nomenclature of cultivated plants is based and its Articles and Recommendations guide the ICRA in their acceptance or rejection of new cultivar epithets.

The primary functions of an ICRA are:

- To register cultivar and cultivar group epithets in the denomination class for which they have accepted responsibility and ensure their valid publication.

- To publish full lists of all cultivar and cultivar group epithets in that denomination class.

- To maintain records in as great a detail as is practical of the origin, characteristics and history of each cultivar group in that denomination class.

It is NOT the function of an ICRA:

- To conduct Trials.

- To judge if one cultivar or cultivar group is more meritorious or more useful than another.

- To judge distinctness of cultivars or cultivar groups.

In order to carry out these functions it is necessary for an ICRA to prepare a registration form on which it should require all applications for cultivar naming to be made. In the past most of the cultivars that have been named have been sourced by members of The Meconopsis Group in the UK. These plants have then been trialled before naming to ensure that they are distinct and have merit but with the growing interest in *Meconopsis* throughout the world it is our intention to prepare a registration form and to place this on-line on our web-site in order to facilitate cultivar naming applications.

Each ICRA is also required to produce an International Register and Checklist which should list the epithets of all cultivars and cultivar groups that have been named in the denomination class concerned, whether they are still known to be in cultivation or not. This should include all synonyms and clearly indicate in each case the original legitimate epithet. A comprehensive Register and Checklist is currently in the course of preparation and it is intended that this too will be made available on our website.

The Constitution of The Meconopsis Group has recently been changed. Authority for naming has been transferred to the Trials and Assessment Sub-Committee

and the Group is committed by the revised Constitution to follow ICNCP naming rules. The Sub-Committee will continue, just as it has in the past, in its work to trial cultivars for distinctness and merit and to present to the Group its opinions and judgements on individual cultivars. It was proposed that each of the cultivars assessed or which have been named in the past by the Group should be given an MG Star Rating. Such an award would only be given to cultivars which had been fully assessed and could also be shown in our Register together with any Awards that have been given to the cultivars by outside bodies.

Geoff continued by giving a short overview of the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants* with particular reference to the naming rules in the *Code* that we needed to be aware of. For instance *Article 27.2* of the *Code* requires that the description of a cultivar put forward for naming should include either a word or words that (a) indicate one or more recognisable characters of a cultivar, or (b) distinguish the new cultivar from one whose name has been previously or is simultaneously being established. In addition *Recommendation 27A.1* advises that the description of any new cultivar or Group should be sufficiently full to make clear how the cultivar or Group differs from similar cultivars or Groups. It was also noted that acceptance of a cultivar or Group name by an International Cultivar Registration Authority does not imply judgement on the distinctness of that particular cultivar or Group, nor on its agricultural, horticultural or silvicultural merit.

The talk continued with some illustrations of the detail that might be included in the individual cultivar references contained in our Register and Checklist. This would be dependent upon the status of the cultivar concerned and on how much we knew of its history. It was also intended that brief descriptive details would be given to highlight the characteristic features of the cultivar. Geoff also showed the registration forms that he had prepared, the first a simple form which just asked for the basic information needed for cultivar registration, and the second a more complex form that he had designed to capture more information from anyone wishing to register a name for one of the "Big Blue Poppies". This latter form had been designed in "tick box" format and would require accompanying guidance notes to help the applicant to complete as much of it as possible.

An outline was then given about how to go about naming a new cultivar including the various prohibitions in cultivar epithets. It was advised that there was little point in naming a cultivar unless you planned to propagate and distribute it. In addition we should not attempt to name a cultivar until we had a number of individuals which were uniform and stable. If the cultivar is to be seed raised we should also ensure that the progeny remain uniform and stable from seed collected on more than one occasion. And finally we should try to ensure that our proposed new cultivars were distinct or an improvement on other named cultivars.

As the talk was largely text based Geoff broke it up at appropriate intervals by showing photos of some plants that he had raised from seed in recent years, much of this seed was distributed by the MG seed exchange. The plants included *M. tibetica*, *M. sherriffii* (from seed collected in S.E. Tibet), *M. napaulensis* (true species), *M. dhwojii*, *M. integrifolia ssp. souliei*, *M. integrifolia ssp. integrifolia*, *M. sulphurea*, a tall and robust unnamed plant raised from seed of *M. 'Evelyn'*, and *M. betonicifolia* which had been flowered from Chinese seed this year. He also

showed photos of plants raised from the recent cross that he had made to produce *M. x beamishii*. The cross had been made in reverse using *M. integrifolia* ssp *integrifolia* as the seed parent and *M. grandis* ssp. *grandis* 'Himal Sky' as the pollen parent. The plants, which flowered this year, had entire leaves similar to those of the original cross and were very different to those of plants which usually go around under this name. There was also a photo of young plants raised from seed that he had collected from *M. 'Slieve Donard'* last year. Might this be another example of chromosome doubling?

Geoff also said that his original plants of *M. 'Alaska'* (he had retained about 30% of those that he had originally raised from the seed received from Kay Sawyer in Alaska) were largely infertile. It has been reported that *M. 'Alaska'* produces abundant seed but he did not think that this was correct. His original plants produced only a very small amount of seed each year which was unlikely to come true. Photos of plants raised from MGS 3 seed distributed by the exchange were shown, these were very different to the photos of his original plants showing much more "*baileyi* character" both in their flowers and leaves. There was also distinct variation in some of the seed capsules of plants raised from MGS 3 seed, particularly in style length and shape. Although many of the plants raised from MGS 3 seed were very good in their own right they should not be called *M. 'Alaska'*.