

# The Scottish Rock Garden Club Forrest Medal - Hexham Autumn 2019



## Crocus tournefortii Shown by Alan Furness



### Alan Furness Crocogenius

Alan Furness gained his fourth Forrest medal with this fabulous pan of *Crocus tournefortii*. 'Only four Forrests?' I sense you asking incredulously! 'Surely Alan has won the top award at many shows'. Yes! He has also won over 30 Farrer medals, confirming him as one of the preeminent exhibitors in the UK.

His magnificent pan of *Crocus tournefortii* has been built up over the past 20 years since the time he received one bulb of the species. During this time he has cared and nurtured it. Each autumn he was rewarded by a few more flowers than the year before. I have to commend him for guarding it from the predations of mice, which have decimated my crocuses over the past decades. I now try to keep them safe by growing mine on a high shelf in the bulb house.

*Crocus tournefortii* is native to Southern Greece and the Greek Islands. Where its flowers can vary slightly. In the UK it is probably best to grow it

under cold glass as although it is hardy its delicate blooms can be destroyed by inclement autumn weather. It is cultivated commercially in Greece for its many branched styles which are collected and sold as saffron. You need a lot of flowers to get a decent quantity of saffron!

Alan won the Forrest medal at this show in 2017 with an equally fabulous pan of the white flowered *Crocus banaticus* 'Snow Drift'.

Alan Furness Crocogenius indeed!



**Joseph Pitton de Tournefort** (5 June 1656 – 28 December 1708)



Tournefort was a French botanist, notable as the first to make a clear definition of the concept of genus for plants.

Tournefort was born in Aix-en-Provence and studied at the Jesuit convent there. It was intended that he enter the Church, but the death of his father allowed him to follow his interest in botany. After two years collecting, he studied medicine at Montpellier, but was appointed professor of botany at the Jardin des Plantes in Paris in 1683. During this time he travelled through Western Europe, particularly the Pyrenees, where he made extensive collections.

Between 1700 and 1702 he travelled through the islands of Greece and visited Constantinople, the borders of the Black Sea, Armenia, and Georgia, collecting plants and undertaking other types of observations

Tournefort is often credited with being the first to make a clear distinction between genus and species.

(from Wikipedia 2019)