The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Edinburgh & Lothians Show 11 April 2026

Forrest Medal *Pseudotrillium rivale*

Cyril Lafong



Trillium is a popular genus for woodland gardens and shady borders, but most species are too large to thrive in pots. One notable exception is *Pseudotrillium rivale*, formerly known as *Trillium rivale*, which is native to the Siskiyou Mountains of Oregon. Botanically distinct from *Trillium*, it is now placed in its own genus, of which it is the sole member. *Trillium rivale*, however, is still widely used in horticulture and older literature. Its distinguishing features include spotted petals, leathery leaves with cordate (heart-shaped) bases, and a pedicel (flower stalk) that continues to elongate. As its specific epithet suggests, it grows alongside streams and other watercourses, earning it the common name brook wake robin.

The plant awarded the Forrest Medal was raised from seed of the named form 'Purple Heart', introduced by the late Boyd Cline of the renowned Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery. 'Purple Heart' itself has white flowers marked with purple, which deepen to a rich purple throat as they mature. The plant is self-fertile, and its seedlings are variable, ranging from the typical pale form with sparse purple spotting to individuals with even darker markings than the parent.

The plant in question was selected from a batch of seedlings sown in June 2000. Although *Pseudotrillium rivale* is not generally a vigorous clumper in the wild, some cultivated clones perform well, and this particular plant has gradually developed into an impressive clump. Cyril has nurtured it for many years, patiently watching it increase in size. It took 23 years from sowing for the plant to reach the stage at which it was awarded the Forrest Medal in 2024. This remarkable achievement was repeated in both 2025 and 2026.

The plant is now proposed to be named *Pseudotrillium rivale* 'Forest Dark', in recognition of its particularly deep purple markings.

Cyril grows it in a clay pot in a frame that receives some afternoon shade. The growing medium is a woodland mix of John Innes No. 3 compost, leafmould and grit. If you are fortunate enough to obtain seeds, sow them immediately and keep the pot in a cool, sheltered spot. The seeds benefit from a period of chilling to encourage germination. *Pseudotrillium rivale* seeds are unusual among trillium seeds in that they will tolerate being stored dry, even germinating more than a year of dry storage but they will then enter dormancy and might take longer to germinate.