The Scottish Rock Garden Club

Forrest Medal Perth Show 18 April 2026

Cyril Lafong *Polygala calcarea* 'Czech Sky'



Two species of milkwort, *Polygala vulgaris* and *P. serpyllifolia*, are widely distributed throughout Britain. A third species, *P. calcarea*, commonly known as chalk milkwort, is found only in southern England, where it typically grows in short, grazed turf on calcareous soils. It has several garden forms.

Polygala calcarea 'Czech Sky' began as a small plant that Cyril acquired from Jiří Papoušek during a visit to the Czech Republic in 2016. Jiří had received the original plant from Zdeněk Zvolánek in 1989, who had obtained it from friends in southern England. The plant was clearly already in cultivation rather than being collected from the wild. Zdeněk gave it the name 'Czech Sky'. Czech growers consider this clone easier to cultivate and brighter blue in flower than other named forms. One such form is 'Lillet', which was collected from the wild near Lillet in north-eastern Spain, from which it takes its cultivar name. This was the plant that earned Cyril his very first Forrest Medal at Aberdeen in 1995. With 'Czech Sky' winning at Perth, he achieved his remarkable 70th Forrest Medal!

Cyril initially grew the prize-winning plant in a plastic pot, transferring it to a clay pot as it grew larger. It has since been potted on twice and now occupies a 30 cm pot. His compost mix consists of 70% drainage materials and 30% John Innes No. 3. The drainage materials comprise 3–6 mm grit, coarse perlite, medium vermiculite and propagating bark. When in full flower, the blooms completely cover the foliage, creating a spectacular display. However, as soon as the flowers begin to fade and the petals fall, the flowering stems should be removed to allow light to reach the leaves. At this stage, feeding with a half-strength, balanced liquid fertiliser is essential; without it, the leaves can become chlorotic.