

***Muscari* 'Arthur Henry'** Rob Cole

On 27th February 1994 I found a packet of *Muscari armeniacum* seed which I had received from the Alpine Garden Society seed exchange in 1993, but which I had not sown. I decided to sow it, but being old seed I was not surprised when I only got a single seed to germinate. Undeterred, I potted up this one small seedling bulb on 25th July 1995.

I was interested to notice that when it flowered a few years later, the flowers were violet in colour rather than the blue of ordinary *Muscari armeniacum*, and that the flower stems were reddish rather than plain green. I grew it on to see if the differences were stable and over the years the potful slowly multiplied and the colouration was retained.

I kept the pot of bulbs in my alpine house (a cold greenhouse) where I grew my collection of species and miniature Narcissus and various other bulbs. In the winter of 2010/11 we had temperatures of -18°C here in Worcestershire for nearly a week and I eventually lost over 500 pots of bulbs, all turned to mush by the severe frosting. My pot of *Muscari* bulbs survived however, and the bulbs flowered happily the next spring.

In August of 2016 I split and repotted the bulbs to give them more room to grow on and in February 2017, 23 years after sowing, I took a potful to our Hardy Plant Society meeting to show it to Bob Brown, who I knew was interested in growing *Muscari*, to see if he considered it unusual. He thought it was "like no other", and that I should name it. I have now done so, calling it *Muscari* 'Arthur Henry', my father's Christian names. I shared the bulbs with Bob so that he could assess the plant still further and propagate and distribute it if it proved worthy. Only time will tell.

