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Outstanding new delphinium plants suitable for assessment in the Trials run by the Delphinium Society

The delphinium Society has started trials to assess the outstanding new plants worth recommending for an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) given by the Royal Horticultural Society. Our facilities are limited and we have to choose only plants which stand out as realistic possibilities for this award. An application form is filled in describing the plant including measurements and a description of colours (RHS colour shade guide values are a help). A picture is very helpful. These are sent to the scheme organiser with any other supporting information. The application will be assessed by the review group and if it is accepted triallists will be found. The person making the application, presumably the grower or raiser, must be prepared to supply rooted cuttings for the trial to proceed. Ideally 10 plants are required but if only a few rooted cuttings can be produced the trial is likely to take longer.

There is a general sheet about the delphinium society AGM trials on our website or obtainable from the secretary or the scheme organiser. This gives a broad view of the process.

There is a list of current AGM delphinium plants on the society website and this gives an indication of the quality needed to be awarded an AGM.

The review group may decide to remove a plant from the trial following one or more years if the results are not up to the standards expected. This decision cannot be challenged.

Here are some ideas to bear in mind in deciding whether or not to proceed with an application.

Is the plant superior to other plants in that colour range? Is the plant distinct? Are there any other similar plants? If so, is this plant definitely superior? Is the colour constant? Does the colour bleach in strong sun? Is there any colour splashing in the florets? If the floret is semi-double, is there a well-formed eye? Do seedpods show early? Do the florets hold well or do they shatter early? True double florets are rare and always worth evaluating. Is the spike length 50% or more of the height of the plant? Is the plant prone to fasciation? Is the plant prone to mildew? Laterals are a plus in garden plants. Is the foliage healthy, a good green colour, without mottling? Is the plant perennial? Have you grown individual plants for more than 3 years generally? Do cuttings root easily?

Has a national delphinium society judge commented on the quality of this seedling at a local show?

If you can bring a spike to the national delphinium show it may be helpful to you for review group members to offer advice at that time. Will you please warn the show secretary that you plan to do so in order for appropriate people to be available?

If you require any information from the scheme organiser please send an email to roweclive29@yahoo.co.uk