

# Letters

## *Yucca gloriosa* ‘Bright Star’

I was delighted to read Bob Brown’s praise for *Yucca gloriosa* ‘Bright Star’ (WALBRISTAR) (PVR) [*Some good new plants*, Vol. 32 No.1].

My company, Plants For Europe Limited, manages the intellectual property of this variety in Europe, so I am in a position to add a little more information.

Bob writes that he suspects that it occurred as a sport in tissue culture of *Yucca gloriosa* ‘Variegata’. This is not quite right. It was actually selected as a sport by Tim Crowther of Walberton Nursery, a wholesale nursery in West Sussex.

Tim says:

*Y. g.* ‘Bright Star’ first occurred in a crop of *Y. g.* ‘Variegata’ liners (young plants) at Walberton in about 1984. At this stage, all I noticed were two half-leaves showing deeper gold on one small plant. After it was potted on, I waited another two years until I was able to harvest the next crop of toes (rhizomes). Most of these turned out to be plain *Y. g.* ‘Variegata’, but among the others I had one which was ‘Bright Star’. It was very slow to reproduce and it took some years to build up a small number of plants.

Walberton Nursery has a small tissue-culture laboratory and they worked wonders. Somehow, they managed to find enough clean material to start a true-to-type meristem culture. From this, we were eventually able to grow enough plants to be able to supply other people.

Even in tissue culture, this is a very slow plant to multiply, so supplies in nurseries and garden centres are very limited. It is interesting to note that Tim first spotted ‘Bright Star’ in 1984, but the first plants were not sold until 2005, so it took 21 years of dedication by Tim and the Walberton team to develop this plant. I always think that this story makes a mockery of those who say that mutations (sports) should not be granted Plant Variety Rights (PVR) as they are somehow free of development costs, skill, time and dedication. ‘Bright Star’ has needed all the qualities of a good plantsman and nursery to bring it from a small mutation to a plant that is commercially available to improve our gardens.

**Graham Spencer**, Sussex



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