

Roscoea ‘Raspberry Ripple’

Brian Mathew

Several years ago some pots of *Roscoea cautleyoides* and *R. purpurea* f. *rubra* ‘Red Gurkha’ were alongside each other on our terrace and the plants happened to be flowering at the same time. Usually the former is well over by the time ‘Red Gurkha’ comes into flower but this particular form of *R. cautleyoides* – which originated as a wild collection from China – always starts blooming in late summer/early autumn.

Although not normally a ‘pollen dabbler’, on this occasion I did transfer some pollen from ‘Red Gurkha’ to *R. cautleyoides* to see what would happen, and seed capsules were

duly formed by the marked flower. When the resulting seedlings flowered they were clearly a mixed batch, some being straight *R. cautleyoides* (presumably there had also been some self-pollination) while others bore some of the characteristics of *R. purpurea*, larger-flowered and more robust in growth. Noticeably, the internodes between the leaf blades were reddish as in ‘Red Gurkha’, while the flowers were an extraordinary mixture of yellow and purple.



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from the assessment panel, including ‘can I have a piece’, which is a sure sign of approval. It therefore seemed desirable to give it a name, and ‘Raspberry Ripple’ pretty much sums up its appearance – perhaps more like the late stages of a raspberry ripple ice cream as it begins to melt. This note will serve to establish the name and a standard specimen will be prepared for the Wisley Herbarium. 🍷

Brian Mathew VMH was a botanist in the Herbarium at the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew for 25 years, studying mainly bulbous plants. He has written several books on the subject including *The Smaller Bulbs* (1987) and monographs on *Crocus* (1982) and *Iris* (1981). From 1993 to 2002 he was editor of the 224-year old journal *Curtis’s Botanical Magazine*.