



Includes
details of all
AGM hardy *Nerine*



AGM hardy *Nerine*

RHS Grower Guide

Helping gardeners choose the best plants

The Royal Horticultural Society trials a wide range of ornamental and edible garden plants to test their health, performance and weather endurance. The best performers may receive a prestigious RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM). Plant Trials provide the opportunity for multiple selections of the same genus to be grown side by side for the purpose of comparison. The selections are assessed by an expert RHS forum panel and the trial results are used to inform their decision to award plants the RHS AGM status.

The plants are usually grown from seed and vegetative material, submitted by nurseries, individuals and breeders. Visitors to RHS Garden Wisley are encouraged to view ongoing plant trials on the Trials Field. Off-site trials are also held at gardens and nurseries across the UK.

For more information

Details of current and past RHS Plant Trials, including Trial Reports, can be found online at rhs.org.uk/trials-awards

There are also a limited number of earlier Plant Trial Bulletins available to download, or as printed copies. Printed copies can be obtained from The Wisley Plant Centre at RHS Garden Wisley, or by contacting the Trials Office at the address below (donations are requested to cover the cost of these bulletins).

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Front cover image: *Nerine bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* 'Quinton Wells'
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Nerine bowdenii 'Isabel'

Welcome



Nerines have been cultivated in the UK for more than 350 years. For most of that time it was the Guernsey lily (*Nerine sarniensis*), which was grown as a plant for windowsills or the greenhouse. These autumn-flowering bulbs are treasured for their rich colours enlivened by glistening tepals, giving a sheen of gold or silver. The Guernsey lily is, though, one species in a small genus of 26 species, all of which hail from southern Africa. From the 1850s onwards, further species were introduced into cultivation, some of which were hybridised with *N. sarniensis* to produce the remarkable range of more than 1,000 cultivars that is grown today.

It was not until the turn of the 19th century that a hardy *Nerine* was introduced into cultivation in the UK. *Nerine bowdenii* was discovered in 1898 in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa, an area known for its summer rainfall and with a climate similar to the British Isles. Initially it was thought to be only hardy in favoured areas of the UK, but by the mid-20th century it was known to be hardy in most of the UK.

Since then, interest has grown for the wonderful addition the genus brings to autumn gardens. In recent years, breeding work by the Dutch has delivered some outstanding cultivars and many new selections have been named. With 40 cultivars listed in *RHS Plant Finder*, which selections should the gardener hunt down?

Based on the results of a four-year trial, this *Grower Guide* highlights the finest selections, 17 of which have retained or received an AGM, helping you get the best from these plants.

John David
RHS Head of Horticultural Taxonomy
and *Nerine* expert



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Hardy *Nerine* trial

Nerine bowdenii is a widely grown autumn-flowering bulb, which is now regarded as hardy in most parts of the UK. It is sought after for its colourful blooms that flower for six to eight weeks through autumn.

In 2007 the RHS Herbaceous Plant Committee and Nerine & Amaryllid Society held a hardy *Nerine* study day at RHS Garden Wisley. The intention was to bring together as much authoritatively named plant material and as many experts and enthusiasts as possible, with the aim of better understanding the *Nerine* selections in cultivation as well as attributing accurate names to them. The day provided the catalyst for a plant trial with plants established *in situ* at RHS Garden Wisley in 2012, ready to begin in 2014. Five bulbs of each selection were planted. Judging began in September 2014 and was completed in November 2017.

The purpose of the hardy *Nerine* trial

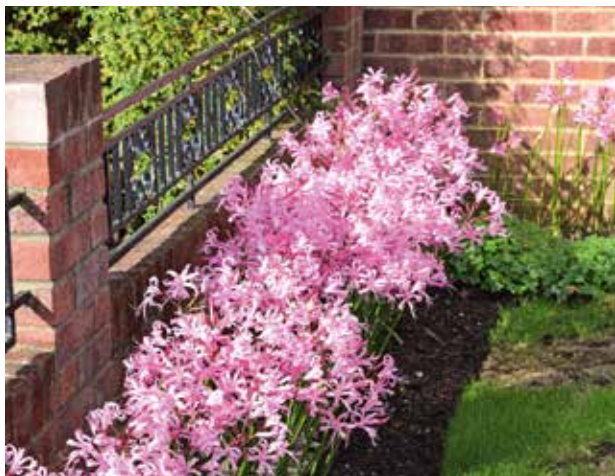
Two sites were selected for the *Nerine* trial: one at The Patch in Shropshire (then the site of the Plant Heritage National Plant Collection), and a second at Bramdean House, Hampshire, home to an extensive collection of nerines. The trial would test the effect of different soil and climatic conditions on plant growth.

The Patch has rich, loamy soil and experiences cold winters, while Bramdean has chalky, clay soil, a southerly aspect and benefits from milder winters.

Though it was originally intended that each site would trial identical cultivars, not all selections were grown on both sites. In total, 52 entries were common to both sites. Many named and unnamed selections were included and not all were selections of *N. bowdenii*.

The objectives of the trial were to:

- ◆ Test *Nerine bowdenii* cultivars and hybrids for UK garden hardiness
- ◆ Clarify the nomenclature so enabling the commercial market to provide correctly named cultivars
- ◆ Grant the RHS Award of Garden Merit to cultivars that met the stringent criteria required for plants to receive the accolade



JOHN DAVID

A particular challenge for the Trials Forum, highlighted by the study day, was the inaccurate or incomplete naming of cultivars supplied. Establishing the distinctiveness of each cultivar and correctly identifying the entries during the course of the trial were essential.

Accurately named cultivars, with good descriptions backed up by specimens in the RHS Herbarium, are important for the horticultural trade as well as home gardeners. Since the genus is naturally variable, there has been significant potential for misidentification as new selections have arisen as a result of the work of plant breeders as well as through natural hybridisation. Additionally, Dutch bulb growers have developed cultivars for the cut-flower market, increasing available choices.

Judging the trial

A Forum was appointed and Bob Brown of Cotswold Garden Flowers was the chair. This Trials Assessment Forum assessed the entries three or four times from September to November in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Records taken during the assessment included:

- ◆ Number of bulbs producing leaves each year
- ◆ Date the first leaf emerged
- ◆ Number and height of scapes
- ◆ Number of flowers per inflorescence
- ◆ Inflorescence width
- ◆ Individual flower width
- ◆ Time of flowering
- ◆ Undulations of the flower tepals (crisping) with a score of one being crisp, and five being flat

The following factors were all taken into consideration:

- ◆ Wow factor
- ◆ Floriferousness
- ◆ Length of flowering
- ◆ Disease resistance
- ◆ Weather resistance
- ◆ Vigour

RHS Horticultural Database

RHS Plant Trials provide an important record for RHS research into cultivated plants and their names, and data is stored on the RHS Horticultural Database.

Colour references

In all plant descriptions that follow, the letter and number codes after the colour names refer to the *RHS Colour Chart* (2015). The chart is available to buy at rhsshop.co.uk



RHS hardiness ratings

To help gardeners determine which plants may be hardy in their locality, the RHS hardiness rating scheme is listed below. Temperatures given are minimum winter requirements.

Rating	Temperature ranges °C (°F)	Category	Definition
H1a	Warmer than 15 (>59)	Heated glasshouse – tropical	Needs to be grown as a house plant or under glass year round.
H1b	10 to 15 (50 to 59)	Heated glasshouse – subtropical	Can be grown outdoors in summer in sunny/ sheltered locations but performs best as a house plant or in glasshouse conditions.
H1c	5 to 10 (41 to 50)	Heated glasshouse – warm temperate	Can be grown outdoors in summer through most of the UK while daytime temperatures are high enough to promote growth.
H2	1 to 5 (34 to 41)	Tender – cool or frost-free glasshouse	Tolerant of low temperatures but will not survive being frozen. Except in some inner-city or coastal areas, requires glasshouse conditions in winter, but can be grown outdoors after last frost.
H3	-5 to 1 (23 to 34)	Half-hardy – unheated glasshouse/ mild winter	Hardy in coastal/mild areas except in hard winters and at risk from early frosts. May be hardy elsewhere with wall shelter or good microclimate. Can survive with artificial winter protection.
H4	-10 to -5 (14 to 23)	Hardy – average winter	Hardy through most of the UK, apart from inland valleys, at altitude and central/northerly locations. Possible foliage damage and stem dieback in winter. Potted plants vulnerable.
H5	-15 to -10 (5 to 14)	Hardy – cold winter	Hardy through most of the UK even in severe winters. May not withstand open or exposed sites or central/northerly locations. Evergreens can suffer foliage damage, potted plants are at increased risk.
H6	-20 to -15 (-4 to 5)	Hardy – very cold winter	Hardy throughout the UK and northern Europe. Many plants grown in containers will be damaged unless given protection.
H7	Colder than -20 (<-4)	Very hardy	Hardy in severe European continental climates including the UK's exposed uplands.



Hardy *Nerine*

◆ **Overview** Grown for their flamboyant flowerheads, which provide late summer and autumn colour, hardy nerines are clump-forming bulbous perennials. They are available in a range of sizes, tepal size and colour, which ranges from white to deep pink. Depending on the selection, leaves appear between late February and early May and die back in late summer or autumn as inflorescences (flowers) emerge. Flowers are long-lasting and generally not damaged by frost, although a hard frost can cause unopened inflorescences to collapse. All cultivars of *N. bowdenii* can be grown outside in the UK, but only a few selections of *N. undulata*, and the hybrids between the two can be grown outside. Tender *Nerine* species can be grown in a glasshouse. Nerines make great cut flowers.

◆ **Soil** *Nerine* require well-drained soil and do well in raised beds. They prefer good soil but will tolerate poor quality soil if fed, and don't cope well in wet or waterlogged conditions.

◆ **Size** Height from 38–90cm (15–36in) with most around 45–60cm (18–24in). Inflorescence size varies from 15–22cm (6–9in). Leaves are 1–2cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in) wide.

◆ **Planting** Plant bulbs in spring, in moderately fertile, free-draining soil. Bulbs are best planted 20cm (8in) apart and not too deep – their necks should protrude above the soil. Choose a site where bulbs benefit from sunshine and are protected from wind and rain. Bulbs are perennial and may take a couple of years to become fully established. Once established the bulbs will tend to become exposed and form a mound. In sheltered sites this is not a problem but in colder areas, the bulbs need to be reburied to ensure winter protection.

◆ **Garden position** Hardy *Nerine* are ideally located in a sheltered but warm position such as at the base of a south-facing wall. This helps protect the foliage from



GAP / JOHN GLOVER

at a glance

frost damage as it appears in late spring. Growers report that many selections thrive in an open aspect – they require sufficient space to colonise.

◆ **Planting partners** *Nerine* generally do not perform well when over-planted by other plants, as the leaves need plenty of sunlight to ensure a good display of flowers. As such, they are usually better grown alone in bold groups. There are a few autumn-flowering plants that can be grown successfully alongside *Nerine*, but avoid taller plants with large, wide leaves and big flower heads. Autumn-flowering snowdrops and crocuses are good options, as is *Amaryllis belladonna*. Low-growing perennials in toning colours will work well, as will plants with silver foliage.

◆ **Water requirements** Water regularly, particularly bulbs growing in open ground, and feed regularly.

◆ **Aftercare** Bulbs may take two years to establish and do not like to be disturbed once planted. Bulbs increase rapidly and flower better when crowded. Once the leaves die down the bulb becomes dormant. Bulbs may benefit from a mulch in winter, though moisture trapped around the neck of the bulb may cause rot.

◆ **Propagation** Bulbs may need dividing to prevent overcrowding every four to six years. Divide clumps of bulbs after flowering once the leaves have died down. Break off offsets and replant them in appropriate conditions.

◆ **Pests and diseases** Avoid planting with daffodils as narcissus bulb fly larvae can infect *Nerine* bulbs. All foliage is at risk of damage from slugs and snails. Several viruses are known to affect *Nerine*: no single one is fatal but a build up of different viruses can affect the performance of the plant. Leaves can be damaged by a hard frost. Mealy bugs may affect *Nerine* under glass and can persist outside through mild winters.



Nerine in cultivation

When summer blooms are fading and the garden's hues are autumnal, the exotic-looking, lily-like flowers of *Nerine* offer an explosion of colour bridging late summer and winter gardens.

Nerine is a member of the *Amaryllidaceae* family, which comprises mainly herbaceous and bulbous perennial flowering plants including daffodils and snowdrops.

The 26 species of the genus are distributed across southern Africa and occur in a wide range of habitats from boggy grasslands to semi-desert and cliff edges or mountain tops. They occur in both the winter rainfall areas (Northern Cape) and summer rainfall areas (Eastern Cape and inland South Africa). Those growing in winter rainfall (Mediterranean) areas tend to be winter-growing, such as *N. sarniensis*, and do not cope with the UK winter climate. In the UK they are usually grown under glass. The species from inland South Africa also enjoy warmer subtropical conditions and are not hardy in the UK. Only a few species from the Eastern Cape have proved amenable to outdoor cultivation in the UK. The RHS Plant Trial concentrated on the hardy nerines and these are covered in more detail here.

Principal hardy species

Nerine bowdenii

Nerine bowdenii has asymmetrical, lily-like flowers growing on stems up to 60cm (24in) tall, which vary in colour from white through to deep pink. Each stem produces an inflorescence of six to 12 flowers, which have wavy or crimped tepals. Flowering is triggered in late summer or early autumn by cooler temperatures, and inflorescences last for several weeks. The flowers generally withstand frost, although a hard frost can



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destroy unopened inflorescences. The slightly channelled, strappy leaves precede the flowers, appearing from springtime and usually die back before the flowers appear.

The species is divided into two subspecies: *N. bowdenii* subsp. *bowdenii* from the Eastern Cape and *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* from the Natal Drakensberg. The former was introduced into cultivation by Athelstan Cornish-Bowden, after whom the species is named.

Nerine bowdenii subsp. *wellsii* was introduced by Dr Q A Wells in the 1950s and is distinct in coming into leaf later and flowering earlier than the typical subspecies. The original introduction is known as the cultivar 'Quinton Wells'. The Eastern Cape subsp. *bowdenii* has not been found in the wild since the 1940s. It thrives in UK and South African gardens. Subsp. *wellsii* is plentiful in the Natal Drakensberg. Other populations of the species exist in the wild but not in the Eastern Cape.

Nerine bowdenii first received an Award of Garden Merit (AGM) from the RHS in 1927 as a hardy plant for sheltered places. This was renewed when the AGM was reinstated in 1993. As there were only a few cultivars assigned to *N. bowdenii* until quite recently, the AGM was retained for the species. Today there are many more *N. bowdenii* selections available, each of which is considered individually for an AGM.

Nerine undulata

Nerine undulata is a native of the Eastern Cape and occurs in a wide range of habitats generally closer to the coast than *N. bowdenii*. It is also a variable species and this means that some selections may be hardy while others need to be grown under glass. The species also ranges from deciduous to semi-evergreen, the latter usually occurring in wetter habitats. One distinct form has been known in cultivation as *N. flexuosa* but this name is incorrect and the form is currently referred to as *N. undulata* Flexuosa Group.

N. undulata flowers even later than *N. bowdenii* (in November–December) making it susceptible to weather damage and slugs. The only *N. undulata* cultivar that currently holds an AGM is *N. undulata* 'Seaton'.



The Award of

The RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) is intended to help gardeners select plants that have good all-round garden value, and is only awarded to plants that are:

- ◆ Excellent for ordinary use in appropriate conditions
- ◆ Available
- ◆ Of good constitution
- ◆ Essentially stable in form and colour
- ◆ Reasonably resistant to pests and diseases

Plants of all kinds may be considered for the AGM, including fruit and vegetables. Currently, more than 7,500 plants have an AGM, but new awards are made each year. Awards are made after assessment by an RHS forum of experts, including nursery owners, specialist growers and horticulturists. Each assessment is ratified by the relevant RHS plant committee.

The Award of Garden Merit can also be given by 'round-table assessment'. An award is given when a forum of horticultural experts meets to debate the characteristics and garden performance of plants that the RHS is unable to physically trial.



The AGM logo on a plant's label shows it has the RHS seal of approval.



Garden Merit

To ensure consistent standards are maintained, the AGM is subject to regular review to make sure that every plant still merits its place on the list. Since 2013, reviews have been conducted by each RHS plant committee on a rolling basis.

Buying plants with the AGM

It is easy to find and buy AGM plants:

- ◆ Search using the RHS 'Find a Plant' feature on rhs.org.uk/plants or using our AGM Plant Search
- ◆ Download a list at rhs.org.uk/agmlists
- ◆ Check the latest edition of the *RHS Plant Finder* book, available to buy at rhsshop.co.uk
- ◆ Look out for the AGM logo the next time you are in a garden centre or nursery

The following nerines have all received the RHS Award of Garden Merit following trial. In total, 17 selections were awarded the AGM following the trial.

AGM nerines

The following hardy *Nerine* cultivars have received the RHS Award of Garden Merit following trial.



Nerine bowdenii 'Bianca Perla'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: September and October.
Flowers over a long period for six to eight weeks.

Stems: 30–50cm (12–20in).

Flowers: glistening white, wavy petals with
five to nine flowers per inflorescence.

Hardiness rating: H5.

THE FORUM SAID:

*Best clear, strong white Nerine
on the market. Bulks up well.
A good cut flower selection.*



Nerine bowdenii 'Diamond'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: late August to mid October.

Stems: 50–65cm (20–26in) tall.

Flowers: pale lilac-pink (73B) tepals, fading to 73D and 69D at the base. Broad tepals with a faintly darker midrib. There are 11–13 flowers per inflorescence.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: this cultivar flowered reliably in the trial. Selected by Ken Hall from bulbs from Tony Norris's Nerine Nurseries.

THE FORUM SAID:

*Has a long flowering season.
Very stately appearance with
a strong, bold habit.*





Nerine bowdenii 'Ellex'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: early September to mid October.

Stems: tall stems, 55–60cm (22–24in).

Flowers: clear pink flowers (N66D) with crimped margins. Up to 15 flowers per inflorescence.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: selected by Ken Hall from bulbs from Tony Norris's Nerine Nurseries.

THE FORUM SAID:

*A really beautiful, strong, bold plant,
which bulks up fast.*

Has a long flowering season.



Nerine bowdenii 'Isabel'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to mid October.

Stems: 40–60cm (16–24in). Sturdy.

Flowers: vibrant pink (67A) flowers with a strong stripe on the outer part of the tepal.

Hardiness rating: H4.

Notes: this is the darkest coloured of the hardy nerines. It is of Dutch origin.

THE FORUM SAID:

Fabulous, striking colour.

Bulks up very quickly.





Nerine bowdenii 'John Crisp'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: often early into flower – August to end of September.

Stems: 65cm (26in). Strong and sturdy.

Flowers: pink (68B) flowers. Narrow, crimped petals. Many flowering heads.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: doesn't mind dry shady conditions. Has subspecies *wellsii* in its parentage.

THE FORUM SAID:

One of the earliest to flower with a six-eight-week flowering period.

Bulks up well.

Large bulbs.



Nerine bowdenii 'Margaret Owen'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: early September to mid-October.

Stems: 30–45cm (12–18in).

Flowers: narrow tepals, candy pink (68B) in colour with a darker median stripe and crisped edges. Each inflorescence has 12–17 flowers.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: this is a selection by Margaret Owen, one-time holder of a National Plant Collection. It was selected from a collection of *N. bowdenii* seedlings being grown by Ken Hall and originating with Tony Norris. It is likely to have subsp. *wellsii* in its parentage.

THE FORUM SAID:

Bulks up fast and produces many scapes. From a planting of three bulbs in 2012, there were 147 bulbs by 2017 and these produced 25 scapes that flowered for more than eight weeks.

A magnificent garden plant for borders and containers.





Nerine bowdenii 'Marjorie'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: early September to early October.

Stems: 40–50cm (16–20in).

Flowers: a vibrant candy pink becoming paler (68B) at the margins and darker at the midrib (68A). Inflorescence is 22cm (9in) in diameter.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: originally from Logan Botanic Garden, Stranraer.

THE FORUM SAID:

*Very dependable in the garden
with lovely dark pedicels.*

*The large flower head size is a
distinguishing feature of this cultivar.*



Nerine bowdenii 'Mount Stewart'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to mid October.

Stems: 30–40cm (12–16in).

Flowers: large, deep pink (67C) flowers.
Richly coloured. Not strongly crisped petals.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: named for the garden of that name in Northern Ireland. It has been in circulation incorrectly named as N. 'Hera'.

THE FORUM SAID:

*Good intense flower colour that lasts
two months in the garden.*

Excellent in bulking up fast.





Nerine bowdenii 'Pink Surprise'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to early October.

Stems: 30–50cm (12–20in).

Flowers: the broad tepals are pale (69D) with a distinct median pink (65B) stripe. A large inflorescence up to 26.5cm (10in) wide containing up to 11 flowers.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: selected by Avon Bulbs from a batch of cultivated bulbs from South Africa. Originally named in 2007.

Distinctive as the only hardy *Nerine* with a broad median stripe and paler margins.



THE FORUM SAID:

An attractive combination of tones gives the whole plant a lot of 'presence'.

*Good bulking up over the trial period.
Three bulbs were planted and they increased to 52 by the end of the trial.*

Nerine bowdenii 'Praecox'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid August; the first cultivar to flower in each year of the trial.

Stems: 50–60cm (20–24in).

Flowers: 68B. Up to 10 flowers per inflorescence. Tepals not strongly crimped.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: an old cultivar that has been in cultivation for many years. Seems to have originated in East Anglia.

THE FORUM SAID:

A magnificent garden plant.





Nerine bowdenii 'Regina'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to mid October.

Stems: stout, 40–50cm (16–20in).

Flowers: reflexed tepals, each 12mm (½in) wide, irregularly arranged. The outer area of the tepal is dark pink (N57C) with a central broad stripe (N66D). There are seven to nine flowers per inflorescence. This cultivar is notable for its abundant flowers.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: introduced by Springbank Nurseries in 2005. This cultivar may be a hybrid.

THE FORUM SAID:

Produces large bulbs but few in number.

Lovely colour with large, robust flowers.



Nerine bowdenii 'Stam 63'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: early to mid October.

Stems: 35–40cm (14–16in).

Flowers: sugary pink (N67C). Each produces up to 10 recurved flowers. Moderately undulate tepals.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: also known as *N. bowdenii* Favourite, this is a Dutch cultivar that was introduced to cultivation in 1975.

THE FORUM SAID:

*Probably the most widely grown
cultivar in British gardens.*

*Bulks up fast and is remarkable for
the size of its bulbs and flowers.*





Nerine bowdenii 'Stefanie'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: September to October.

Stems: 30–40cm (12–16in).

Flowers: pale, creamy-pink (56A) flowers with a hint of orange beginning very pale pink at the tip of each tepal, paling to white at the base. It has recurved edges and moderately undulate petals. Six to nine florets per inflorescence.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: a Dutch cultivar in production for 20–30 years and grown for cut flowers. There is a great deal of confusion over the similarly coloured Dutch cultivars 'Rowie' and 'Nikita'.

THE FORUM SAID:

A dependable cultivar that always does well.

Good bulking up during the trial period.



Nerine bowdenii subsp. *wellsii* 'Quinton Wells'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: August to October.

Stems: 60–70cm (24–28in).

Flowers: 68A. Narrow tepals with a high degree of crimping.

Hardiness rating: H5/H6.

Notes: a distinct geographical form from the Natal, Drakensberg. Leaves appear later in the year than the Eastern Cape subsp. *bowdenii*. The leaves are often present with the flowers. This cultivar prefers damper conditions and is hardier. This is the clone that was introduced by plant collector Dr QA Wells in the 1950s.

THE FORUM SAID:

Bulks up fast.

*Very easily recognised
by the high degree
of tepal crispness.*





Nerine bowdenii 'Top Hat'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to early October.

Stems: 35–55cm (14–22in).

Flowers: clear pink (N66C) tepals with moderate crisping around the tips of the flowers. There are seven to 11 flowers per stem.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: named after Margaret Owen's fondness for distinctive headwear. Another selection from stock originating from Tony Norris's Nerine Nurseries.

THE FORUM SAID:

Strong leaves and scapes give this plant a magnificent, majestic appearance.

Has a long flowering season over eight weeks.

Fast to bulk up.





Nerine bowdenii 'Welland Pale'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: mid September to mid October.

Stems: remarkably tall stems, 75–90cm (30–35in).

Flowers: pale pink (68B), attractively crimped flowers appear early in the season.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: known for a long time as 'Wellsii pale form', this plant is thought to have come from Tony Norris's Nerine Nurseries and appears to be the result of crossing *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* with *N. bowdenii* 'Manina'.

Nerine undulata 'Seaton'

AGM 2017

Flowering time: October to November.

Stems: 25–30cm (10–12in).

Flowers: pretty pink (N66D) tepals. Strongly recurved and crimped petals creating a spidery effect. Small, compact, rounded inflorescence with 13–16 flowers.

Hardiness rating: H5.

Notes: one of the few entries to the trial that is not a *N. bowdenii* cultivar. Originated from a Devon garden. Leaves appear in late summer and will remain through the winter. This is a smaller plant than typical *N. bowdenii* that has proved remarkably hardy for the species.

THE FORUM SAID:

Very reliable performer – better placed in a gravel bed than a herbaceous border.

Also performs exceptionally well in containers.

Fast to bulk up.





Nerine 'Kinn McIntosh'

Other notable nerines from the trial

Hybrids between *N. bowdenii* and *N. undulata* Flexuosa Group

There were a number of entries in the trial that produced inflorescences after the main flowering of the *N. bowdenii* cultivars, and after the judging season had ended. These have considerable potential in extending the flowering season up to mid December.

They all appear to be hybrids between *N. bowdenii* and *N. undulata*, and it is the latter species that extends the flowering season. These hybrids are distinctive in that they produce a new flush of leaves in late summer to early autumn, which they retain through the winter. There is a brief period in the summer when these leaves die down, but even then some will remain until the new leaves are produced. The leafing pattern seems to combine the growth characteristics of both parents. Inflorescences will tolerate a moderate amount of frost, but a hard frost will cause them to collapse. Another problem with these plants is that they are unduly prone to damage by slugs and snails.

Most of the hybrids have not been named, but there are two that have: *Nerine* 'Kinn McIntosh' (often sold as *N. bowdenii* 'Kinn McIntosh') and *Nerine* 'Pink Triumph'.

Hybrids between *N. bowdenii* and *N. sarniensis*

This hybrid has been made repeatedly since the introduction of *N. bowdenii*. It combines the vigour and hardiness of the former species with the richer colours of the Guernsey lily.

The first of these to be made, *N.* 'Hera' in 1908, is still available today and was represented in the hardy *Nerine* trial at The Patch under the name 'Mrs Dent Brocklehurst'. Most of the progeny from this cross take after *N. sarniensis* in producing new leaves in the autumn but the leaves are not generally frost hardy and over time plants lose vigour and fail to flower. The best known example of this cross is *N.* 'Zeal Giant'. It was awarded an AGM in 1998 but this was rescinded as plants in the trial did not perform well and rarely flowered. Another example in the trial was *N.* 'Gletsjer' (also sold as *N. bowdenii* 'Gletsjer' or under the name Glacier), which produced fine white flowers of a good size in the first year, but did not overwinter at either site.

Recent Dutch breeding along the same lines has resulted in the Elegance Series. A plant under this name flowered at The Patch, producing warm pink flowers typical of the *N. bowdenii* hybrid with *N. sarniensis*. The plants did not thrive in the open ground. These cultivars are best grown at the foot of a warm wall where the additional heat will promote flower formation and protect the inflorescences and leaves from heavy frost. Under these conditions *N.* 'Zeal Giant' remains an outstanding plant.

× *Amarine tubergenii* Belladiva Series

Plants of this hybrid between *Amaryllis belladonna* and *N. bowdenii* raised by the Dutch were beginning to be released as the trial was being established, but were too late to be included. The series is distinctive for the tall inflorescences and the large, more symmetrical flowers in various tones of pink. Some cultivars are now being named (for example 'Anastasia', 'Aphrodite', 'Emanuelle'). Plants tend to retain their foliage at the time of flowering and into the winter and do not appear to suffer from frost damage.





Hardy *Nerine*

Cultivar names in the below list are included in single quotes. Entries lacking single quotes are not considered cultivar names but are terms by which the plant was identified at the trial.

List of plants trialled

- ◆ *N. alta*
- ◆ *N. bowdenii*
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Bramdean cultivars
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Evans seedling
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Andrew Lanoe
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Cornish Bowden house
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Drusilla Hayes
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Gary Dunlop Exp No 3
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Gary Dunlop Exp No 4
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Myra Carmichael
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Rachael Forbes
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex RBG Edinburgh
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Richards Hobbs
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Ruth Scott
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Simon Scott
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Terry Jones seedling
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ex Timothy Clarke
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Exp No 1 (not 'Pink Triumph')
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Exp No 1 late-flowering



Trial site at The Patch in Shropshire. The trial also took place at Bramdean House in Hampshire.

Trial 2014–17

- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Exp No 3
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Exp No 4
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* MO selection ex Ken Hall ex Tony Norris
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Smee form
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Smee seedling
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Terry Jones Exp No 1
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Terry Jones Exp No 2
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Washfield form
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Alba'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Albivetta'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Alpharet'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Angel's Tears'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Barnaby Grist
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Bianca Perla'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Blush Beauty'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Blush Desire'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* blush white
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Castlewellan'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Cornish Bowden
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Douglas blue = 'Mount Stewart'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Dutch pink
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* East Lambrook Manor
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'E. B. Anderson'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Ella K'
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* 'Eric Smith'

- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Favourite ‘Stam 63’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Fenwick’s var = ‘Mark Fenwick’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Garden House Giant’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Gary Dunlop Exp No 1
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Gary Dunlop Exp No 2
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Irish clone
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Isabel’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Jim Jam’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘John Crisp’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* John Morley
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Kathleen Pollock
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ken Hall No 1
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ken Hall No 2
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ken Hall No 3
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ken Hall No 4
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Kyre Park
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Linda Vista’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Lord Grenfell = ‘Mount Stewart’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Manina’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Margaret Owen’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Margery Fish’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Marjorie’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Mark Fenwick’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Marney Rogerson’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Mollie Cowie’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Mount Stewart’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Mrs French
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Mrs Jebb
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Newington
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Nikita’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Ostara’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Pallida’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Patricia’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Petworth pale
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Pink Frostwork’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Pink Surprise’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Praecox’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Promivetta’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Regina’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Richard Blake-way-Phillips’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Robert Smith’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Shardlow alba
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Shardlow pink
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Sheila Owen’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Siviter Smith
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Sofie’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Stam 63’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Stefanie’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Steve Eyre
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Stewart Gilkison’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Stickworth Pattie’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Susan Grayer’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Swain
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ted Allen No 2
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Ted Allen’s Early
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Tess Allen’



N. bowdenii
‘Vesta K’



N. bowdenii subsp.
wellsii ‘Quinton Wells’



N. Elegance Series

- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Till
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Tony Norris’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 1
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 2
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 3
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 4
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 5
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* Tony Norris seedling No. 6
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘Vesta K’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* ‘Quinton Wells’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* dark form
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* pale form = *N. bowdenii* ‘Welland Pale’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* subsp. *wellsii* pale, shorter form
- ◆ *N. bowdenii wellsii* ‘Quinton Wells’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘White Frilly’
- ◆ *N. bowdenii* ‘White Surprise’
- ◆ *N. Elegance Series*
- ◆ *N. ‘Gletsjer’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Hera’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Kinn McIntosh’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Mr John’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Mrs Dent Brocklehurst’* misidentified in the Trial = *N. ‘Hera’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Pink Triumph’*
- ◆ *N. platypetala* misidentified in trial = *N. undulata*
- ◆ *N. undulata*
- ◆ *N. undulata* ‘Seaton’
- ◆ *N. undulata* Alta Group
- ◆ *N. undulata* Flexuosa Group
- ◆ *N. undulata* (Flexuosa Group) ‘Alba’
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Giant’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Grilse’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Pink Stripe’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Purple Stripe’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Salmon’*
- ◆ *N. ‘Zeal Silver Stripe’*
- selection from East Lambrook Manor
- selection from RHS
- selection obtained from University of Reading
- pink-flowered, spidery form



N. ‘Gletsjer’



N. ‘Mr John’

Source of selections trialled

- ◆ Alex Wolkonsky
- ◆ Andrew Eames
- ◆ Andrew Lanoe
- ◆ Andrew Ward
- ◆ Anne Baring
- ◆ Avon Bulbs
- ◆ Barry Ward
- ◆ Beeches Nurseries
- ◆ Bob Brown
- ◆ Bridgemere
- ◆ Celia Jones Condover
- ◆ Chris Lane
- ◆ Crug Farm Plants
- ◆ D Montgomery
- ◆ Drusilla Hayes
- ◆ E B Anderson
- ◆ Egglantine Jebb
- ◆ Exbury Gardens
- ◆ French Coltishall
- ◆ Gary Dunlop
- ◆ Graham Gough
- ◆ Green Farm Plants
- ◆ Hayloft Plants
- ◆ Jim Gardiner
- ◆ Jim Marshall
- ◆ John Amand
- ◆ John David
- ◆ John Gallagher
- ◆ Joyce Heywood
- ◆ Ken Hall
- ◆ Keith Ferguson
- ◆ Malcolm Allison
- ◆ Marchants
- ◆ Margaret Owen
- ◆ Margery Fish
- ◆ Marina Christopher
- ◆ Martin Rickard
- ◆ Mary Keane
- ◆ Matt Bishop
- ◆ Mere Park Plant Centre
- ◆ Myra Carmichael
- ◆ Nicholas Rothschild
- ◆ Nuala Sterling
- ◆ Pam Schwerdt
- ◆ Peter Chapell
- ◆ Peter Erskine
- ◆ Plant Exchange
- ◆ Rachael Forbes
- ◆ Ray Cobb
- ◆ RHS Garden Wisley
- ◆ Richard Blakeway-Phillips
- ◆ Richard Hobbs
- ◆ Rod Leeds
- ◆ Rose Clay
- ◆ Rougham Hall
- ◆ Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
- ◆ Ruth Scott
- ◆ S Kreuzberger
- ◆ Sheila Owen
- ◆ Simon Savage
- ◆ Steve Eyres
- ◆ Stuart Donachie
- ◆ Ted Allen
- ◆ Terry Jones
- ◆ Timothy Clarke
- ◆ Tom Mitchell
- ◆ Victoria Wakefield
- ◆ Walter Blom
- ◆ William Lockyer
- ◆ Woodside
- ◆ Xa Tollemache

Current RHS Plant Trials

In 2020 the following trials are taking place at RHS Gardens and Partner Gardens:

Trials Field, Wisley

Crocosmia: 2019–20

Persicaria (bistort / knotweed): 2019–20

Echinacea (coneflower): 2016–20

Paeonia (peony): 2016–20

Sanguisorba (burnet): 2017–20

Nepeta (catmint): 2017–20

Fritillaria imperialis: 2019–20

Lagerstroemia (crepe myrtle): 2017–21

Physocarpus (ninebark): 2014–20

Viburnum: 2013–20

Blueberry: 2018–20

Raspberry: 2018–20

Cypripedium (lady's slipper orchid): 2016–20

Eucomis (pineapple lily): 2017–20

Lilium (lily): 2018–20

Apiaceae family: 2019–20

Off-site trials

Erica (heather): 2015–20

Threave Garden and Estate

Cornus (dogwood): 2017–20

RHS Garden Hyde Hall

Iris reticulata (bulbous iris): 2017–20

RHS Garden Hyde Hall

Hemerocallis (daylily): 2018–21

Sissinghurst and Floors Castle

Geum: 2019–21

RHS Garden Harlow Carr

Spiraea: 2019–22

East Ruston Old Vicarage

This *Grower Guide* was compiled with information from the RHS Plant Trial notes 2014–2017, written by RHS Trials Officer Mark Heath. With thanks to John David and Mark Heath. For more information about RHS Plant Trials visit rhs.org.uk/trials-awards

This guide is dedicated to Margaret Owen, *Nerine* expert and Trial Forum member, who passed away in October 2014.



Inspiring everyone to grow

About the RHS

The Royal Horticultural Society was founded in 1804 by Sir Joseph Banks and John Wedgwood to inspire passion and excellence in the science, art and practice of horticulture. Our vision is to enrich everyone's life through plants, and make the UK a greener, healthier, happier and more beautiful place.

This is the fourth in a series of *Grower Guides* from the RHS. It contains a wealth of information about hardy *Nerine*, as well as highlighting the important role of Plant Trials in the work of the RHS to better inform and give confidence to gardeners about the plants they purchase.

For more information about the RHS, visit [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

The list of hardy *Nerine* with an RHS Award of Garden Merit (AGM) noted within this guide is correct as of January 2020. The Award of Garden Merit is reviewed according to a rolling programme to ensure the standard of garden-worthiness is maintained.



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