



## **Twin Scaling of Galanthus (Author unknown) -**

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

Twin scaling takes advantage of the meristematic nature of the basal plates of the bulb. The technique is nothing more than dividing the bulb into small portions, each consisting of a piece of bulb. (i.e. the scale) and a portion of the basal plate.

### **2. THE TECHNIQUE:**

The bulbs are lifted after the leaves die down about the end of May and early June. Preparing the bulbs is done by removing the the brown outer scales, the roots and the top one third to make a flat top.

Dividing the Bulbs - Use gloves, industrial spirit to surface sterilise the bulbs, a sharp scalpel and a methylated spirit burner. The bulb is divided into sixteen equal parts and then subdivided into thirty-two twin scales.

Treating the Twin Scales with Fungicide - Use liquid Dithame (Mancozeb) and cover the scales in a beaker. Leave for thirty minutes and then wash.

Storing the Scales in Vermiculite - Use approximately 250-400mls of Vermiculite. The water content is important; 8 vol. of water : 100 vol. of vermiculite. Then store in plastic bags (ten inches by seven inches). Seal with a rubber band leaving a good air space and label.

Storage - Store in a dark, warm, well ventilated place, for example an airing cupboard, for approximately twelve weeks and before roots develop.



### **3. PLANTING THE SCALES:**

Plant in clay pans in a well drained compost - this is done at about the end of August to early September. They are grown on in cold frames and water controlled carefully, but not protected from frost.

### **4. GROWING THE BULBS ON:**

They are allowed to grow on for the first year in the frames until they die down in May. They are then planted in the garden, where they will flower after another two years.

#### 5. NOTES:

I) Twin scaling is applicable to the genus *Galanthus*.

II) It is particularly applicable to the large snowdrops which have good size bulbs, as you can get thirty two scales from one bulb.

III) It takes three years from twin scaling to flowering size bulbs.

IV) It is a good technique to increase rare and unusual snowdrops.

#### 6. FURTHER INFORMATION:

Growers' Bulletin No. 6 - Glasshouse Crop Research Institute

Twin Scaling, by Gordon Hanks and Susan Phillips



Photos (Taken by Robert Amos):

- *Galanthus elwesii*
- *Galanthus* 'Diggory'
- *Galanthus* 'Wasp'