



Gold Medal – Peony of the Year Proposal

Nate Bremer – February 2, 2021

Reiner Jakubowski brought up a point to me about the "Gold Medal Peony's" status the year after awarding (it becomes "Peony of the Year"). Reiner points out this is confusing and was probably invented to promote the peony further for commercial purposes. While that is fine, most members probably are wondering why the "Gold Medal Peony" turns into the "Peony of the Year" afterwards or they may not notice at all. APS really doesn't do much promotion of the "Peony of the Year" and it is only casually mentioned in its description. Additionally, I've never seen commercial members make use of "Peony of the Year," but have seen the use of "Gold Medal Peony". I'm in agreement with Reiner's assessment which is "Peony of the Year" really doesn't serve much of a purpose and could be addressed in a different way. The BOD has no record of creating "Peony of the Year" and it was probably someone's idea to further publicize it. Thus it was not a BOD decision to create this and we can get rid of it without any official decision making. (Reiner notes: "Peony of the Year was instituted by Claudia Schroer, but to find out exactly when is probably not worth the effort. It was between 2004 and 2008 because I remember the Board discussion about it. The purpose was to provide something for the garden writers early in the year when they were talking about all the other plants of the year being put forth by the various (mostly) marketing associations. Using the GM from the previous year sounded sort of like yesterday's news. Give it a new name and it sounded more up to date.")

However, Reiner suggested we make some changes in the way we deal with the "Gold Medal Peony" which makes sense. Here's his proposal:

- a. The Gold Medal Peony should be determined and announced 1 year ahead of the year it is designated as "Gold Medal Peony." This would mean that APS announces the 2022 "Gold Medal Peony" this year (2021), which would allow growers to organize themselves to promote it in their marketing programs and also provides more time for APS to promote it. Doing this would create a one year shift, which APS would announce the 2021 and 2022 "Gold Medal Peony" in the same year, but then would get us on track for future years with single plant announcements. This eliminates the "Peony of the Year" and rolls it all into the "Gold Medal Peony" and removes some complexity and the confusion.
- b. Thus, this year, APS would determine two (2) "Gold Medal" winning peonies. One will be used for the current 2021 award. The other will be used for the 2022 award. The 2021 awarded plant could be announced this fall (when we normally do it) and the 2022 could be announced in the winter (December) so we don't list them at the same time and they appear as separate announcements. The 2021 peony would be shorted a bit, but no more than it normally is.
- c. In 2022, APS then would be on schedule to determine and announce the 2023 "Gold Medal Peony" in the summer/fall of 2022. Basically we'd be on track to award one peony again for the following year and would continue that practice in future years.
- d. This practice allows more exposure time for the "Gold Medal Peony" for both APS and Commercial Entities. Ultimately, it places more focus on the historically important "Gold Medal Peony" and is less complicated than the previous practices involving "Peony of the Year".

In summary, this is a timing issue which rolls "Peony of the Year" into the "Gold Medal Peony" which are already closely tied. I recommend we roll the two together as described above.