



## Alpine Garden Society Ulster Group

Plant of the Month, April 2019

### **Fritillaria meleagris**- by Liam and Joan McCaughey

For this month, a common wildflower of temperate Europe, the Snake's Head Fritillary. This is flowering happily in a damp grassy spot below willows in our garden just now.

It doesn't occur in the wild in Ireland (apart from a single find in Wexford recorded in the BSBI atlas). Here, too the BSBI writes "This species was cultivated in Britain by 1578 but only found in the wild in 1736; it has never been clear whether populations in traditionally managed floodplain meadows in central and S.E. England are native."



In Gerard's Herbal, one of its common names is *Guinea hen flower* – the species name means 'spotted like a guinea fowl' from the Ancient Greek name *μελεαγρί* for this bird.

With us, it times its flowering nicely to follow the succession of snowdrop and then daffodils in the corner below the willows.

For lots more information, look at the Ballyrobert Nursery website <https://www.ballyrobertgardens.com/products/fritillaria-meleagris>