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MINIATURE  
DAFFODILS  
by  
ALEC GRAY

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## MINIATURE DAFFODILS

BY ALEC GRAY

THE first thing to do is to define what is meant, or rather what I mean, by a Dwarf Daffodil. When I speak of semi-dwarfs I shall mean anything which does not exceed the size limits laid down in Sections 2 and 6 of the Show Schedule, that is to say, not more than 12 inches high and having a flower not more than 2 inches in diameter. When I refer to dwarfs, however, I am thinking of very much smaller plants in point of height — not more than 6 or 7 inches high. The size of flower is another matter, however, as *Narcissus triandrus albus*, for instance, often has flowers over 2 inches across if flattened out, but is certainly a true dwarf, or miniature Daffodil.

The next thing to consider is the purpose for which Dwarf Daffodils are suitable ; these are two-fold, first for outdoor decoration, and secondly for indoor decoration.

The outdoor uses may be again divided into two, the rock garden, and borders and naturalization. The indoor uses can also be divided : the alpine house, and room decoration.

Most Dwarf Daffodils are not difficult plants to grow in the rock garden ; very few are intolerant of frost, or are very particular regarding soil ; what most really object to is humid atmospheric conditions and stagnant water at the roots. It is very common for someone to come to my stand and ask me if my little flowers are really grown outdoors. I tell them every one is, and they then ask where, and when I reply "In Cornwall" the enthusiasm fades from their faces, and they remark "Well, of course, you can grow anything in Cornwall." I only wish this were true ! Cornish gardeners have nearly as many troubles as any other gardeners, and the damp climate of the extreme south-west is by no means ideal for Dwarf Daffodils.

I have hardly ever known frost or cold to do any damage, but damp sea mists in early spring often play havoc.

In planting miniatures outdoors it must always be kept in mind that they are too small for their beauty to be appreciated individually : they must be planted in groups and often the larger the group the better. On the other hand, care must be taken not to plant too closely, since, if they establish themselves, they are best left undisturbed for three or four years, and some sorts soon become overcrowded and fail to flower. Also those sorts which only increase very slowly by division should be allowed to seed themselves.

It is often desirable to use some kind of cover for the soil beneath the plants in the rock garden. Such plants as the very

Dwarf Thymes can be used, and not only do these show off the Daffodils to advantage, but also, which is more important, they keep the blossoms from getting dirty. Of course, fine stone chippings will serve the same purpose. These keep the bulbs cool and moist in the summer — an advantage with some, but not by any means all, for many varieties need to be well ripened by the summer sun if they are to flower well.

As to the depth at which to plant I should say as a general rule that they should go down rather more than twice their own height, in other words, a bulb, say  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch high, should have nearly an inch of soil on top of it when the earth has settled.

While the ground should be in a fairly fertile condition, dung, and such like, must be avoided like poison, as they encourage skin diseases and rank growth, which in its turn encourages fungoid diseases of the leaf. Indeed, with very many sorts an excess of humus in any form may cause trouble. A little bone meal, if you like, but that is all I advise in the way of fertilizer. Lime, I have never known to do any direct good or harm to any sort of Daffodil.

Since I have mentioned that the best method of increasing many sorts is by raising seedlings, a few words on this subject may not be out of place, although the methods employed do not differ greatly from those used in raising the larger Daffodils from seed.

As to soil, a good mixture is about three parts medium loam, one part granulated peat, or clean leaf mould, and one part sand, not too fine, and a little bone meal if thought necessary. The seed can be sown in open beds if desired, but where both the seed and the quantity to be sown is very small, I think boxes or a frame are to be preferred. If boxes are used they should be at least 4 inches deep, and 6 inches is better. They should be filled to within  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of the top with the compost suggested. After sowing the seed fill to the top with soil and give a good watering ; allow the soil to settle and then sprinkle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of fine peat over the surface. This keeps the soil cool and prevents drying out.

I suggested the use of frames just now, but I am not thinking of ordinary cold frames ; these can be used if desired, although the lights would never need to be put on except in very exceptional circumstances. The frames I use are just four pieces of rough board about 6 inches wide nailed together to form a rectangle.

A convenient size for such a frame is about 6 feet long by 2 feet 6 inches wide. The boards can be sunk 2 or 3 inches into the ground, and the centre well dug and then filled with the compost recommended and sowed with seed in just the same manner as boxes, over which they have the advantage of not drying out so rapidly. They



are, on the other hand, better than the open bed, because they are more easily kept free from weeds and, since the surface of the soil is some inches above the general level, better drainage is secured.

Sow your seed as soon as it is ripe, or at any rate as soon as all your seeds are ripe, generally in July.

Leave undisturbed for two years and then plant out in open ground.

In the smaller kinds a large proportion of the seedlings will flower the third year. A few sorts such as *N. Bulbocodium citrinus* are never really dormant, and these, by sowing seed in the spring, I have flowered in eighteen months.

When you lift the bulbs after two years they can be given hot-water treatment with perfect safety. The miniature Narcissi are subject to Eelworm, just like their bigger brothers, but they are not very subject to the attentions of the Narcissus flies. Their worst enemies are Botryis and other fungoid diseases, which cause the plants to rot off at ground level, or the bulbs to decay from the outside.

Many of the semi-dwarf varieties are very charming in the herbaceous border if planted in fairly large clumps, but the beauty of the very small sorts is apt to be lost sight of in such a position. A few of the vigorous kinds may, however, be used for edgings. For naturalizing in grass, both dwarf and semi-dwarf varieties may be used effectively, but here again only vigorous sorts will thrive.

The cold or cool glasshouse, or Alpine house, may be used to grow miniature Daffodils in, first, for the better care and protection of rare or difficult sorts ; secondly, for the better appreciation of the commoner kinds, which thus cultivated can be seen and admired at close quarters ; thirdly, for the growing of kinds for which the outside conditions of your locality are unsuitable, and fourthly, simply for the beauty they bring to the house in the often dreary days of early spring.

Little needs to be said concerning their cultivation under such conditions : treat them very much as you would any other hardy bulbs. Keep the pots or pans outdoors for as great a part of the year as possible and give the minimum of heat if this is used. Avoid humid conditions, but water freely whenever possible.

I have long felt that, were they better known, the miniature Narcissi would make an irresistible appeal for room decoration. The large flowered Daffodils are much too tall to look well in any ordinary pot or bowl, and as growing plants they are simply impossible

for table decoration. To my mind, to be in proportion the height of the plants in a bowl should not be greater than the diameter of the bowl, and they not need to be staked.

It is often said that bulbs in pots or bowls are very charming but their season is all too short : this criticism certainly does not hold good with the dwarf and semi-dwarf Daffodils, for, with very little trouble, and next to no heat, a succession can be had in flower for nearly six months out of the twelve.

For the decoration of the dining table few things look more lovely than a bowl of say *N. Bulbocodium citrinus* or *N. triandrus albus*. It can be set in the middle of the table and one can converse with the person opposite unimpeded by a screen of foliage !

I do not advise growing these little bulbs in fibre, not only because of the expense, the bulbs being of little use afterwards, but also because they very often go blind under this treatment. Heat will also have the same effect if applied before the buds are well above ground. I think the ideal way to grow them for indoor decoration is to find an ornamental bowl you like, then get half a dozen Alpine pans which will fit inside it and plant these up with bulbs to flower in succession.

Keep the pans plunged outdoors, or in a cold frame or house, and only bring indoors just before the blooms open, and take outside, and plunge again, as soon as the flowers fade. Treated like this the bulbs can be used two or more years without re-potting.

In the space at my disposal I shall not have the opportunity to do more than give a very brief description of all the Dwarf Daffodils which the intending grower has to choose from, and I propose to treat them from the gardener's rather than the botanist's point of view.

To begin with the *Bulbocodiums*, which are some of the best known and easiest dwarfs. They are all very small plants and are easily distinguished by their large expanded coronas and very narrow perianth segments.

The commonest variety of *Bulbocodium* in cultivation is probably *conspicuus*, 4 to 6 inches high and bright golden-yellow. It increases very rapidly by division or seed and is perfectly hardy in the south. It makes a pretty edging for herbaceous borders in the early spring.

*N.B. tenuifolium* closely resembles *conspicuus*, and although not very often seen is, in my experience, just as hardy and prolific. It can easily be distinguished by its shorter stems and prostrate foliage. This latter habit makes it a more effective plant than *conspicuus*, the blooms of which are apt to be hidden in its tall leaves.

*N. obesus*, in form, colour and habit closely resembles *tenuifolium*, but as its name implies is more robust in all its parts. The leaves which are quite prostrate are almost succulent. It is an excellent pot plant.

*N. citrinus* is the tallest of the *Bulbocodiums* and the corona is much more expanded than in the last two sorts. It is pale sulphur-yellow and a very charming plant. It is said to be the hardiest of the tribe, but I have always found it most difficult to increase by division and all my stock is raised from seed, which it produces in profusion.

One of the smallest of all Daffodils is *Bulbocodium nivalis*, which bears tiny yellow flowers on a stem only an inch or so high. They seem to increase rather slowly, but set seed quite well.

These are all the chief European sorts, and they like quite a considerable amount of moisture in the soil, but the *Bulbocodiums* I come to now hail from North Africa, or the extreme S.W. tip of Europe, and like a good deal drier conditions.

*N. monophyllum* or *Clusii* is surely one of the most lovely of all Narcissi ; it is not an easy plant to grow, but is worth a good deal of trouble. Of lovely form and the purest white, it flowers in mid-winter but is much too fragile a thing to blossom out-doors at that season of the year. The chief complaint made against *monophyllum* seems to be that the bulbs cannot be started into growth but remain dormant often for years on end.

This certainly occurs with such species as *elegans* and *viridiflorus*, but *monophyllum* has never given me trouble from this cause. My trouble with it has been its liability to fungus trouble in the bulb, its very slow increase by division, and the difficulty of getting the flowers to set seed in December.

Nearly, but not quite as beautiful, is the variety *monophyllum foliosus* ; nearly as beautiful I say, but not quite, for the flowers, as far as my experience goes, lack the pure, sparkling white of the type, and are milky in hue. It is certainly a much better doer and increases very rapidly.

Another good doer, and a plant that deserves to be widely grown, is *Romieuxii*. This closely resembles *monophyllum* in form, but is a soft pale yellow. It flowers even earlier, often in November with me, and for this reason rarely sets seed. This is no matter, however, as the bulbs divide freely. It seems perfectly hardy, but the lovely flowers need some protection from rain, slugs, etc., if their full beauty is to be seen.

There remain two other sorts seldom seen in cultivation, *N. B. tannanicus*, very like *monophyllus* but with the peculiarity that it holds its head almost vertically, and *N. B. rissanus*, a small, very early yellow sort of no special merit.

A recently introduced species from the South of Spain *N. hedreanthus*, if not quite a *Bulbocodium*, is very closely related. It is one of the dwarfest and earliest of all Narcissus. The stems which grow at 45° to the ground are rarely more than 2 inches long and the pale yellow flowers open from November onwards.

There is a good deal of confusion in the names of the trumpet species of Narcissi, as the botanical and garden names do not always coincide. In the brief descriptions which follow the first name is the botanical one under Pugsley's classification, and that which follows, in brackets, is the name by which they are usually known to gardeners and listed in catalogues.

The smallest of these, *N. asturiensis (minimus)*, is perhaps the best known and best loved of all Dwarf Daffodils, but I have never found it a very easy bulb to propagate and have never managed to work up one quarter of the stock I should like. It is very liable to fungoid diseases and divides very slowly. It sets seed freely, but it is difficult to ripen and harvest them as the pods rest on the ground as they mature, and are very frequently eaten by slugs, or if they do ripen they are overlooked and the seed lost. *N. asturiensis (minimus)* is really too small to be seen to advantage in any but the most tiny rock gardens, but is ideal for pans and stone sinks.

Better for the ordinary rock garden is *minor (nanus)*, which closely resembles *asturiensis (minimus)* except that it is rather larger and taller and flowers a good deal later. Larger again, we have *pumilis (minor)*, which is often 6 inches high. It is deep yellow : its pretty, serrated trumpet, as well as its colour easily distinguishes it. The two closely related double forms, *pumilis (minor) plenus* and 'Rip Van Winkle,' are quite pretty, but suffer from very weak stems. Another useful variety, for naturalizing in particular, is 'Santa Maria,' a hybrid of unknown origin rather like a small *N. maximus* ; its curiously shaped tube suggests the possibility of some *Bulbocodium* blood in its parentage.

*N. nanus (lobularis)* is about the same size and height as *pumilis (minor)*, but is really a bi-colour with a yellow trumpet and very pale yellow perianth. It increases much more rapidly than any of the foregoing, but I do not admire it, as the shape of the trumpet is not very pretty and the colours a little muddy.

Although found in the lists of large flowered Daffodils and marketed as a cut flower, I feel I must include in my catalogue of semi-dwarfs, *obvallaris*, the 'Tenby' Daffodil.

It is a lovely little flower, with perfect form, stiff stem and clear fresh colour. If you can establish it in grass it does not come much more than 6 inches high and is well worth growing. Crossed with *asturiensis* (*minimus*) it gives little flowers of perfect form. *N. obvallaris* forces well and is lovely in bowls.

*N. pallidiflorus* (*pallidus praecox*) is a dwarf in point of height, but not in size of flower, which is out of proportion to the stem. It is very early but a poor doer and not often seen nowadays. The wild English Daffodil *N. pseudo-narcissus* is valuable for naturalizing in grass in large drifts, but for little else.

The last yellow trumpet I need mention is 'Wee Bee' a very small and very smooth little flower still scarce.

'Rockery Beauty' is a very nice little bi-colour with a good contrast between trumpet and petal. It grows from 4 to 6 inches high, has a very stiff stem and pleasing form, but is rather slow to increase.

Another very good small bi-colour is 'Little Beauty,' a very smooth Dutch raised variety about 5 inches high, but still scarce.

Halfway between the yellows and whites comes 'W. P. Milner,' a well-known old variety I am very fond of. It grows some 9 inches high and is of a very pale greenish-yellow colour, which sounds as though it would be unpleasant, but it is not. It is always recommended for bowls but is just as nice outdoors.

There are only four small white trumpets with which we need concern ourselves. Many other semi-dwarfs seem to have existed in the past, and perhaps still linger on in old gardens, in Ireland in particular, but their constitution is too poor for them to be widely distributed.

*N. alpestris* (*moschatus*) is the smallest of the four I have to mention, only some 3 inches high, with a drooping, snowy-white flower. Some people think it beautiful, others that it looks withered, anyway it is rather a difficult plant, and I doubt if I could keep my stock did it not seed freely.

*N. moschatus* (*cernuus*), is a much bigger plant and a very much better doer, indeed, so far as increase goes, it tends to the other extreme, as it splits up too freely, many of the bulbs going "broody," producing dozens of tiny little slips. One or two of the small Daffodils are subject to this trouble, just as some of the large ones are, and I have no idea of its cause. *N. moschatus* (*cernuus*), both in size and form, rather resembles 'W. P. Milner,' and like this sort is valuable for bowls and also makes a brave show planted in largish patches in the border.

*N. moschatus (cernuus) plenus*, the double form, is, I think, a very beautiful flower, and I have never found it difficult as it is reputed to be, although rather slow to increase.

There is, I believe, some doubt as to whether this is really the double form of *moschatus (cernuus)*, but from some which have become almost single I think it must be. Some flowers open with the "rose" form, others with only the trumpet double, but this does not seem to be constant.

'Rockery White' is said to be a seedling from *nanus (lobularis)*; it may be, but I am a little doubtful as the bulbs are so very different from that species. It was raised in Holland and is very prolific, and is quite a pretty plant to my mind, it opens pale yellow but fades pure white with age.

For want of a better place, I will here mention the plant generally called *Capax plenus*, 'Queen Ann's Double Daffodil.' There is a good deal of mystery connected with it, but it seems probable that it is some double Daffodil crossed with *N. triandrus*.

I think it a lovely little thing with its rows of sulphur-yellow petals arranged neatly one on the other to form a perfect star. It differs from all other Daffodils in showing no trace of a corona. I have always found it do quite well, but slow to increase.

Now we come to *N. triandrus*. The plant known as *triandrus albus* is probably the type and there are four well-marked varieties in cultivation.

*N. triandrus albus* is one of the best known and useful miniature Daffodils. It varies a good deal in size and colour; some are really white, but there is generally a creamy tint.

It is a fairly easy plant to grow, but likes a dry or at any rate a very well drained situation, and a light soil, being a native of mountain slopes. I have never found it increase very rapidly, but it bears abundant seed which is very easily grown on.

Like some of the Dwarf Jonquils, two types of flower are to be found, one with a short style and one with a long. One assumes that this is a device to aid pollination in its native land, but here at any rate it seems unnecessary as it sets seed with perfect freedom without the aid of insects or artificial fertilization.

It is a lovely little thing for pans or bowls as well as for the rock garden.

*Triandrus loiseleurii* is closely related to *albus*, and very large plants of the latter are apt to be mistaken for it. It is, however, absolutely pure white and is a larger and stiffer plant and the

corona is slightly inflated. It is most easily identified, however, by its foliage, which is most curiously twisted and semi-prostrate and quite unlike that of most other Narcissi.

It has the reputation of being rather difficult, but I have found it on the whole easier than *albus* and it seeds equally freely.

*N. triandrus concolor* I am very fond of, but it is not too easy a plant. It is easily distinguished from *albus* and *loiseleurii* by its deep cream or pale primrose colour and also by the much more globular corona. Fortunately it is easy to raise from seed or I should have lost my stock long ago.

Up to quite recently several firms listed a plant called *triandrus pulchellus*, but the bulbs I bought under this name always turned out to be *concolor*. This plant was supposed to have reversed colouring, but I do not think it ever existed and the plant called *pulchellus* by old authors was, I believe, a *triandrus-jonquilla* cross, perhaps the variety now called 'Hawera.'

The last *triandrus* is *aurantiacus*. This has not been introduced many years and most people would vote it the most beautiful of the four.

As its name implies, the flowers are deep golden-yellow. It blooms a good deal earlier than the other three, but I have not found it an easy plant to grow. It is subject to Botrytis, and does not increase by division much more rapidly than *concolor*, while it is a poor seeder. In spite of all this, however, it is so beautiful that it will repay trouble and disappointment.

*Triandrus* hybrids are a very interesting group of which I am very fond, but have rather a bad reputation as regards vigour. This was certainly deserved by many of the plants raised by the early hybridizers, as almost all of these are now extinct, but there are others of quite good constitution.

'Queen of Spain' is a well-known natural hybrid, *triandrus* × an unknown trumpet variety. I have always found it of fair constitution but slow to increase.

All the crosses between *loiseleurii* and large flowered Daffodils give seedlings too large to concern us here, but by crossing both this variety and *albus* with Dwarf Jonquils I have raised some very charming little plants, which I will deal with when I come to the Jonquil family.

Here, however, I can mention 'Raindrop,' which is *triandrus* × *dubius*, and a very lovely thing like a miniature snow-white

'Silver Chimes.' I have found it a very healthy plant, if rather slow to increase. Like all the seedlings I have raised from *dubius pollen*, the bulbs are round and very dark skinned.

A good many people now have seedlings from *aurantiacus* flowering, and some very interesting plants are likely to result, as by its use it is possible to get red colouring into the cup of *triandrus* seedlings for the first time.

I have one *triandrus* seedling with a distinct, if faint, pink flush in the cup, but alas ! I don't know its parentage.

It is difficult to get beyond first crosses in breeding from *triandrus*, as nearly all the offspring are sterile.

The next group is *N. cyclamineus* and its hybrids.

In the wild state there seems to be one species with no sub-species or varieties. *N. cyclamineus* itself is too well known to need description and while, as I have said, it has no definite sub-species, it does vary a little. Normally the trumpet is straight sided, but at times it comes with a rather reflexed mouth, and I have had a specimen turn up which was nearly twice as large as is usual and having a very reflexed mouth and exactly resembling the plant figured in the woodcuts in some of the old herbals.

*N. cyclamineus* will thrive in damper situations than any other Narcissi and in such places it seeds itself very freely. Being one of the first Daffodils to bloom in the spring, it is very valuable for the rock garden and Alpine house and is lovely in bowls indoors in the dark days of February. The bulbs do not increase very quickly and are rather subject to fungoid diseases, in particular when out of the ground, and it should always be the first to be re-planted.

*N. cyclamineus* is very useful for hybridizing, as its seedlings not only have a very beautiful and characteristic form but also almost always have unusual substance. The smallest of its hybrids is *minicycla*, raised from crossing it with *asturiensis*, and this is a charming little plant.

Most *cyclamineus* hybrids are early flowering, and one of the first to open is *cyclataz*, a most delightful little thing about 6 inches high — just right for indoor decoration. It is *cyclamineus* × 'Soliel d'Or' and is, I think, almost the only hybrid with 'Sol.' blood in it. It is a scarce plant in gardens although it has always done well with me : probably owing to the 'Tazetta' blood in it, it would not thrive out of the West Country.

*Cyclataz* selfed gave me 'Tête-a-Tête' an improvement in every way, a perfectly formed flower and lovely in pots.

Another very pretty hybrid is 'Beryl,' rather taller than *cyclataz* and a good deal later, as it is a *Poeticus* cross. It is a very



good doer and increases rapidly. It has the deepest coloured cup of any *cyclamineus* hybrid raised so far, but the colours burn quickly in the open.

Two well known *cyclamineus* hybrids are 'February Gold' and 'March Sunshine,' the former very early and lasting and the latter extremely prolific and with an orange-yellow cup. Both are about 9 inches high.

There are quite a number of self-yellow hybrids, but most are too tall to concern us here. I can, however, include a mention of 'Golden Cycle,' which is very early and less than 6 inches high, and also 'Little Witch,' rather later and not so graceful but very tough.

Now we come to much the largest group of miniature Narcissi — the Jonquils and their hybrids.

I am afraid that *N. Jonquilla* itself and its double form are almost too tall to be included in the Dwarf Daffodils, but both are very nice for the larger rock garden if only for their powerful scent.

Of the really miniature Jonquils, *juncifolius* is much the best known. It is an excellent doer with me and splits up rather too freely if anything, which is probably the reason why I never found it flower heavily. It is a lovely thing for pans and bowls and has a delicate and entirely individual perfume. It is very easy to grow from seed.

A plant very like *juncifolius*, only a good deal taller and very much earlier to bloom, is *calcicola*. It is from 4 to 6 inches tall and has deep gold flowers and grey-green foliage; it varies quite a lot but the best types with broad perianth segments are really beautiful and are always admired.

Like *juncifolius* again, but smaller this time, is *scaberulus*, the individual flowers of which are probably the smallest of all Narcissi, unless it be *gaditanus*, which has never bloomed with me.

*Scaberulus* usually has but two semi-prostrate grey-green leaves, and this helps to distinguish it from *juncifolius* which has numerous erect dark green leaves, and *calcicola* whose erect leaves are also grey-green. It is a fair doer.

All the plants mentioned so far carry several flowers on each stem, but those which follow have solitary flowers.

First, there is *rupicola*, which is one of my favourite miniatures, it is a perfectly formed little flower with an almost flat corona which is distinctly lobed. It does not increase as rapidly by division as *juncifolius* but is easy to raise from seed. There are two distinct forms, in one of which the perianth segments are long and narrow while in the other they are broad and overlapping. This latter is much the most desirable form.

*N. Marvieri* in form and colour almost exactly resembles *rupicola* except that it is larger in all its parts, and the leaves are semi-prostrate instead of erect.

The pure white *N. Watieri* is one of the most lovely of all Narcissi. It very much resembles *rupicola* in form, and like it has two varieties, one with narrow and another with broad petals. I have never found it an easy plant to increase as it divides but slowly, and with me at any rate it is not too good at setting seed. I think it is really a plant for the Alpine house, for only there can its fairy-like beauty be really appreciated. Outdoors it is too easily splashed by rain and attacked by slugs.

*Atlanticus* has only recently been introduced to cultivation, and is still very scarce. The flowers are white, but milk-white rather than the dazzling snow-white of *watieri*, from which it differs also in having a more cup-shaped corona.

The Jonquil hybrids are an attractive race of plants and, on the whole, very easy to grow. Quite a number are of unknown origin.

*N. gracilis*, while very charming and most useful as almost the last Narcissus to flower, is too tall to be included in our list, but *tenuior*, closely resembling it and also late flowering, is definitely a semi-dwarf, being about 6 inches high ; the blooms of clear, pale yellow are of model form, but the stem is rather weak and in wet weather the flowers are apt to get dirty. Both this variety and *gracilis* are very subject to stripe disease, and it is difficult to find a plant of the latter entirely free from it : it does not, however, seem to cause much injury.

The two varieties 'Sea Gift' and 'Pencrebar' I always bracket together in my mind as they have a similar history — or lack of it. Both were found growing in old Cornish gardens, the first by myself and the second by the late CAPTAIN HAWKER. The tale concerning the origin of 'Sea Gift' is as follows. It was told me by the woman in whose garden I found it, near Helston.

Many years ago in the "bad old days" a foreign ship was driven ashore near Porthleven. Hundreds of people gathered on the beach concerned, not with trying to rescue the crew, but with obtaining loot. All the crew perished save one sailor, who was washed ashore still living. All the crowd were for pushing him back in the sea, believing in the good old adage that "dead men tell no tales," all save one old woman, who managed to smuggle him into her cottage, where she nursed him back to health. While he was recovering he noted the pride she took in her garden, and when the time came for him to leave, he told his rescuer that, as he had no

money wherewith to pay her, he would send her a gift for her garden from his own country, and, true to his word, in due time a packet of bulbs arrived, bulbs of 'Sea Gift.'

I do not know any story concerned with 'Pencrebar,' which was found in the garden of the house whose name it bears, but it is a very beautiful thing, like a tiny yellow rose, certainly the most charming dwarf double. It has a nice stiff stem and the flower is held well above the foliage. CAPTAIN HAWKER said he found it rather apt to come blind, but this is certainly not my experience.

A very effective garden plant is 'Hawera.' It is a semi-dwarf, about 6 inches high and has distinctly reversed colouring. It was raised in New Zealand from whence bulbs were sent to Mr. Bowles, who, with his usual generosity, gave the bulbs from which my stock has been raised. I do not think that there is much doubt that it is *Jonquilla* crossed with *triandrus albus*. My own 'April Tears' is *Jonquilla*  $\times$  *triandrus concolor* and is definitely a better flower; the colour is a good deal deeper and clearer and the perianth segments broader and flatter. It flowers some week or ten days later and I think it is one of the prettiest dwarfs I have raised so far.

*Triandrus albus* on *juncifolius* gave me 'Peaseblossom,' a pretty little thing 3 or 4 inches high with up to three deep cream or primrose flowers on each stem. It increases very rapidly, a little too rapidly perhaps, as it does not flower quite as freely as I should like.

A rather taller, but very attractive Jonquil hybrid is 'Orange Queen.' The name well describes it, as it is really orange, both in perianth and corona; indeed it has one of the deepest coloured perianths of any Narcissi, if we except those in which the colour of the corona invades the perianth, such as 'Red Guard' and 'Bosloe.'

*N. juncifolius* crossed with *poeticus* has given a number of useful varieties, all late flowering and rather like dwarf *Poetaz*. 'Lintie' is one of the best, having several butter-yellow flowers about 2 inches across, each with a flat orange-red cup. It is a very late variety about 6 inches high.

I do not know of anyone who has used *juncifolius rupicola* much, other than myself, but it has given me seedlings of exquisite form, with perfectly flat, overlapping perianths, and flat, yellow or orange-edged cups. There is an inclination, however, for the stems to be rather longer than I like.

Not many satisfactory seedlings have been raised so far from *N. Watieri*, the best I think is 'Picarillo' which has *N. pumilis* for the other parent, a lovely little sulphur-yellow thing, not more than 3 inches high.

There are, as far as I know, only two *Tazettas* which call for mention here. The first, a semi-dwarf, is *Bertilionii*, which grows some 6 inches high. It is a yellow-flowered species from North Africa and may well be one of the ancestors of 'Soliel d'Or'; it has, however, no great merit as a garden plant.

The second one is *canaliculatus*, which is a true dwarf about 3 inches high, and has a white perianth and yellow cup and a delightful perfume. I think it a pretty little thing and it increases, at any rate with me, faster than any *Narcissus* I know, large or small, but it is not by any means a free flowerer. The bulbs are very large for the size of the plant, and it should be planted several inches apart or it will rapidly become overcrowded.

Closely related to *Tazetta* is *dubius*, a very beautiful little thing bearing several pure white flowers on a stiff stem some 6 inches high. It is not, however, at all an easy plant to flower, as the bulbs require a much more drastic ripening than the sun of an average English summer can give them. Its pollen is very potent and I have raised several charming seedlings with it, notably 'Raindrop': they all have much substance.

Last in our list comes *Poeticus*, and here there are only two which can really be classed as semi-dwarfs, *N. radiiflorus* and *N. verbanensis*. The former is the latest of all *Narcissi*, and comes into bloom when many sorts have completely died down. Its very lateness makes it rather a difficult bulb to propagate as its foliage is attacked by various leaf diseases almost as soon as it is above ground. The flower is interesting rather than beautiful. *P. verbanensis* is very similar but flowers rather earlier, it is just as difficult to keep.

A broad petalled dwarf *Poeticus* would be extremely valuable for hybridizing for, as things are, in order to get colour into dwarf crosses it is necessary to use some more or less tall variety, which has the inevitable effect of increasing the size of the progeny.

Although, in their range, the *Narcissi* are restricted to that part of the world which has been known to botanists the longest, new species still turn up from time to time. One, a tiny species very like *N. juncifolius*, and named *N. Fernandesii* was recently found in Portugal, where most of the Jonquils grow, but unlike all the other small species, seemed confined to marshy ground.

This brings me to the end of the miniature *Narcissi*, since I do not propose to mention any of the autumn flowering species which, although very interesting plants to the botanist, cannot be grown with any success in England, at any rate out-of-doors.