

SOME DWARF DAFFODILS IN THE COLD HOUSE.

BY D. BLANCHARD.

The dwarf daffodil season here usually opens about mid-November with the flowering of *N. Bulbocodium monophyllum foliosus*, this being closely followed by the crosses between it and *N. B. Romieuxii* which have been named 'Tarlatan,' 'Muslin,' 'Taffeta' and 'Jessamy' in that order. In the season 1955-56 flowering was very much delayed, probably owing to excessive ripening and drying out of the pots, and it was not until Christmas that things really got going. These five flowered practically at the same time but with 'Jessamy,' which came from the reverse cross, *Romieuxii* × *foliosus*, a little behind the others. All of them carried a good deal of bloom and nothing seemed to be noticeably smaller than usual.

Some interesting seedlings of second and further generations of the *Bulbocodium* crosses opened at the beginning of January, and half a dozen were selected for further trial. They included (a) practically a full yellow 'Tarlatan' but a little wider and flatter in the corona, (b) a rather similar pale yellow flower, (c) a small smooth white, nearly flat cupped, (d) a full yellow flower opening a couple of days after 'Tarlatan' but not having a very wide corona, (e) a good yellow with a quite flat corona, not frilled, and (f) a full yellow flower with a quite circular corona without frills and nearly flat.

The next flower to open was *N. B. riffanus* with pale lemon corona held more or less erect. The maximum width was $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. but few exceeded 1 in. This was followed in a few days (14th January), by *N. B. mesatlanticus*. This is somewhat similar but the colour is considerably paler, practically primrose. The corona is wider, up to $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. and is held less erect than in *N. B. riffanus*. It was noticeable that by this date the named and unnamed crosses were still in excellent condition, having been out a full three weeks in the cold house.

On the 18th January the first bloom opened on a very curious little plant which is a comparative newcomer here. This is *N. hedraeanthus*, closely related to *N. Bulbocodium* but much smaller and narrower than any except *N. B. nivalis* and carrying its bloom scarcely clear of the ground on a short curved stem of not more than 2 ins. Very shortly afterwards various stocks of *N. b.*

Romieuxii began to open, being about a month later than usual. The first form which was grown here was a very fine lemon yellow with a beautifully open and frilled corona—a very handsome plant. Seedlings from it selfed have given different forms. Some are very fine plants of a full yellow (most valuable in breeding). Others are paler—in fact as pale as *N. B. riffanus*.

Another form of *N. Bulbocodium* opened before the end of January which at first seemed to be the same as *N. B. mesatlanticus*. It came from a different source but very soon differences appeared as follows:—

N. B. mesatlanticus

Colour primrose.
Overall width of corona $1\frac{3}{8}$ in.
Edge of cup much crenellated.
Anthers protrude $\frac{3}{8}$ in.

N. B. subsp. albidus var.
zaianicus forma lutescens

Colour deep primrose or pale lemon.
Overall width of corona $1\frac{1}{8}$ in.
Edge slightly crenellated.
Anthers protude $\frac{1}{8}$ in.

Following this daffodils went into cold storage. The cold house lived up to its name although tightly shut and matted over. From 31st January to 25th February there were only two slight breaks. Outside there were never more than 17 degrees of frost but on the 1st and 2nd February and from the 19th to the 25th the thermometer never reached 32 degrees. The pots must have been frozen solid for weeks on end and did not thaw out fully until after the beginning of March. Mats were left on until they had done so and the house was given all the air possible while the pots were sprayed with cold water. In the end very little harm was done except to a fine pan of *N. calcicola*. This was just coming into flower when the frost started and almost all the growth, both leaves and buds, was killed. A few bulbs survived, but not many.

It was not until early March that anything else opened and the first was *N. B. tananicus*, a small very white flower with the corona facing directly upwards, with style and stamens protruding considerably. About the same time came the first flowers of the typical *N. B. monophyllus*, an icy white flower of the highest quality. It is however quite put out of countenance by a form which originated here among some seedlings received from Charles Mountfort, the same form appearing in his garden about the same time. The habit of this form is the same as that of the type, but the corona, instead of being a wide cup, is quite flat or even slightly

reflexing. Two pots of this form (illustration p. 57) were shown to the Narcissus Committee of the R.H.S. on 13th March and received an unanimous Award of Merit subject to naming. Material was sent out to Dr. Fernandes for this purpose without result, and at the time of writing (October) no one else has succeeded in naming it.

By that time *N. × 'minicycla'* was well out, a most charming little plant growing about 4 ins. tall and definitely intermediate between the parents. The pan carried about two dozen blooms and gave pleasure for weeks. A pot of seedlings of the same cross showed a good deal of variation, most of them having a more reflexing perianth than the original.

N. hedraeanthus (illustration p. 58) now began to show some very interesting features. Two forms are grown here. The first was of V. H. Heywood's collecting and came from the Cambridge Botanic Garden. The more recent one came from Collingwood Ingram and was collected by him. The latter has a narrower cup than the former and flowers later. At first neither form would increase but each bulb carried a single bloom. Nor would either set seed when selfed. But by cross pollinating both ways abundant seed has been obtained. In fact from seed sown in 1954 one seedling flowered on 3rd October, 1956. But in this season, possibly owing to better ripening of the bulbs, they put up far more flowers. Almost all carried more than one bloom whilst one carried as many as five. But this could not compete with Frank Waley who showed at the R.H.S. a pot in which one bulb carried no less than nine blooms.

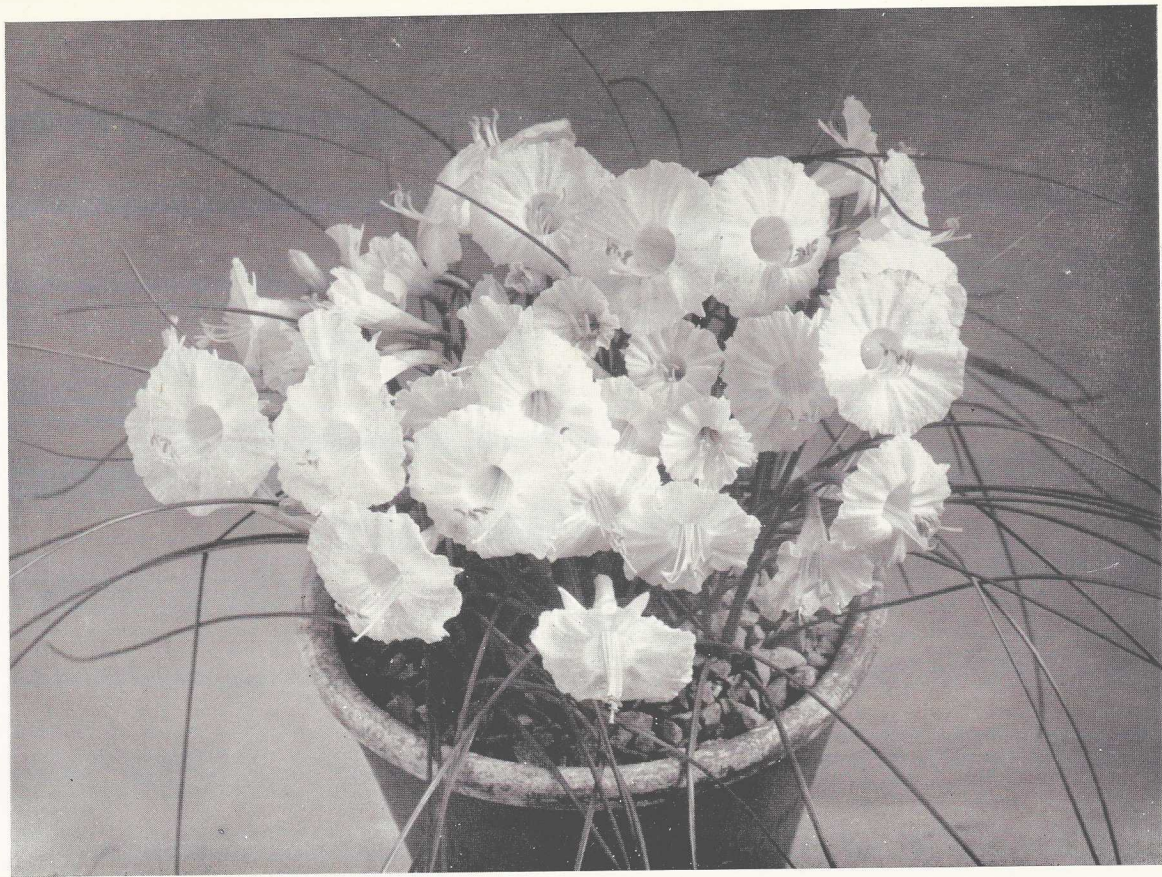
On the 27th March at the Early Daffodil Competitions we were able to secure a first for three species or forms grown out of doors with *NN. calicicola*, *rupicola* var. *Marvieri* and *asturiensis*, the last named just keeping alive long enough, and also a second for three hybrids with *NN. × 'Cyclataz'*, *'Picarillo'* and *'Mustard Seed'*. At the same time *N. scaberulus* was flowering indoors and so could not be shown. This is perhaps the most minute of all the Daffodils. It comes in the Jonquil group and usually carries two blooms on a stem. The perianth reflexes fully and here measured $\frac{3}{8}$ in. across. The corona is bowl shaped and perhaps a shade deeper in colour than the perianth.

Other plants flowering in the house at the end of March were *N. B. nivalis*, *N. rupicola* var. *Marvieri* and *N. atlanticus*. The

first named is the smallest of all the *N. Bulbocodium* forms and grown in scree mixture it rarely reaches 3 ins. in height whilst the corona is not often $\frac{1}{4}$ in. wide. *N. Marvieri* is a most charming flower, growing 6 ins. to 7 ins. high with a wide spreading rather starry perianth and a wide bowl-shaped corona. A pot which secured an Award of Merit in 1953 is well shown in the Daffodil Year Book for that year. The stock here originated from the gift of a single bulb from Charles Mountfort, but with natural increase and seedlings it must now be well over the hundred. The plant is now giving a good account of itself in different situations outdoors. The third of these, *N. atlanticus* is a small white Jonquil from the Atlas whence it was introduced by Sir Frederick Stern to whom this garden is indebted for the present stock. It grows about 6 ins. high but seems rather a tricky plant. The original bulbs after flowering well have deteriorated, but a pot of four-year-old seedlings in a cold frame was quite delightful carrying a dozen blooms. It is not so pure a white as *N. Watieri* but often carries two blooms on a stem, while the corona is bowl shaped. *N. Watieri*, by the way, is not happy here in the cold house, but a group outdoors in the shade of *Matus floribunda* was excellent.

The beginning of April provided one of the great excitements of the season in the flowering of two plants which had never previously produced a bloom. These had arrived here under the names of *N. gaditanus* and *N. g. minutiflorus* but the flowers were identical. The blooms are very close to *N. scaberulus* and the same size. The shape of the corona is however slightly different. It is a rounded bowl whilst *N. scaberulus* has almost straight sides and a flat bottom—more like a saucepan or casserole. But the foliage is quite distinct. It is very fine and is round and rushlike, similar to *N. Bulbocodium*, whilst in *N. scaberulus* it is flat, wide for the size of the plant, prostrate and curling.

By the middle of April three very interesting pots of seedlings flowered. The first came from *N. rupicola* \times *N. Watieri*. The form was typical of the seed parent, and the perianth about 1 in. wide. But the colour was pale lemon or deep primrose, much the same as 'Picarillo'. The other two pots were from *N. rupicola* \times *N. triandrus Loiseleurii* and from *N. triandrus Loiseleurii* \times *N. dubius*. Curiously enough in spite of the difference in breeding the two crosses produced seedlings which were very similar indeed, and some were hardly distinguishable from *N.* \times 'Raindrop'. All the seedlings were white and perhaps those from the *dubius* cross



(See p. 55)

Narcissus Bulbocodium var. *monophyllus* (form).

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were a trifle the better. All the same three blooms from the other lot won the class for one miniature hybrid at the London Daffodil Show. In the other miniature classes this garden could not do better than seconds. In the class for three species the flowers shown were *NN. scaberulus*, *N. juncifolius* form and *N. canaliculatus* (which quite spoilt the group, but was the only thing available). In the three hybrids 'Hawera,' 'Raindrop' and 'Sennocke' were shown, and in the class for one species *N. rupicola* was the flower.

Only one interesting seedling opened after that time. This was a cross of *N. rupicola* \times *N. jonquilla*. The flower was similar to *N. rupicola* but larger, the perianth having a spread of $1\frac{3}{8}$ in. against $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. for *N. rupicola*.

These flowers ended the season as far as the cold house was concerned, but outside patches of 'Hawera,' 'April Tears' and 'Pease-blossom' growing in a border with some shade gave a particularly fine show and lasted for weeks, while in the same border one spike of *N. triandrus Loiseleurii* carried the quite unusual number of seven blooms on one stem. The season went on until well into May and concluded with the best flowering of *N. tenuior* that has occurred here. It is grown at the top of a grassy bank facing south and overhung by a birch and seems to be increasing satisfactorily.

And so ends another curious season which started late, had a blank middle and a good end and it only remains to add that the seed harvest was good, even *N. gaditanus* producing viable seed which has since germinated.



(See p. 55)

Narcissus hedraeanthus.

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