

*Narcissus Notes for the Gulf Coast*

Basing experience on a short time, it would seem that most of the groups of narcissus on which one depends in the North for general effect, and a minimum of garden effort, are either useless here or will require a very considerable time for becoming adapted to the new conditions. The sorts that seem most likely of immediate usefulness fall into the Tazetta and Jonquil groups. Old gardens are full of several Tazetta varieties mostly unnamed, and many true jonquils.

In the garden here, Paper White is dependable for Christmas out of doors. Chinese Sacred Narcissus, which begins its growth about the same time, is less dependable unless one can plant it where it will have some shelter from evergreen shrubs. Its double form, of which we have only a couple of bulbs, has been kept in the cold greenhouse as yet. Soliel d'Or comes a little later and is as common and useful as any in the North. There are several unnamed local sorts that are also almost weeds, but a variety that may prove to be Grand Monarque comes a little later and, like Chinese Sacred Narcissus, the sort that figured in the frontispiece as a minor detail in last month's issue, needs a little more shelter. The still later Grand Primo is safe and excellent. The hybrid, Silver Chimes, that carries also triandrus blood, is latest of all, and superb.

Except for old Laurnes Koster, all of the Poetaz sorts are variable in performance through these their first years. Scarlet Gem is far from scarlet, but blooms well. Cragford was a little irregular in appearing and may or may not settle down properly, but its flowers are all they are in the North. Saint Agnes was excellent, and some bulbs of Martha Washington came up to the mark. Most of the others did not, although there is no reason to despair as yet.

All the forms of *N. odoratus*, including the charming double, did very well indeed, and *N. jonquilla* itself set seed free-

ly as if it intended to take over. It will be a happy day when it does. The local unnamed sort, of course, is a weed, but it fits no description that has been found to date. An old clump of the probably forgotten jonquil hybrid Solleret continues to increase and bloom regularly.

Of the newer sorts, new to this area, Topaz and Golden Perfection were the last to flower, with a few stray flowers also on Sweet Pepper. Topaz looks much like a good Leedsii (old style), but Golden Perfection shows its jonquil blood clearly. Sweet Pepper is valuable as its cup is tinged with red, a nice break among the many that show no great color range, except in the old Orange Queen which is distinctly orange yellow. Earlier, Trevithian and Lanarth gave as excellent performances as ever in the North. All of these make distinct additions to the jonquils known in these parts. Trim bloomed freely but needs another year to show.

Happily all the triandrus hybrids tried have been successful and, while all belong to the group that show the influence of the Leedsii parent rather than a predominance of triandrus blood, the flowers are given freely and abundantly. Silver Fleece and Pearly Queen have been here for some years and have increased regularly and well. It is especially good that we have Pearly Queen, that has rather gone out of fashion in some quarters, as it has a very delightful and distinct scent. Niveth is too new yet to show how it will continue, but as it is a great favorite one hopes for the best. The few bulbs bought as *N. triandrus concolor* bloomed this year after happy increase, and proved to be not that plant at all but a charming small-flowered, yellow *bulbocodium*. This, too, set seed, which usually is a happy sign of acceptance.

If one reads the discussions in A. Fernandez "Sur la phylogenie des especes du genre *Narcissus* L.," there are some puzzling factors to be considered, but a desire to hybridize further among these species, forms and varieties tempts one greatly. From the gardener's point of



view, the white-flowered forms are particularly valuable here, as the strong yellows conflict seriously with the many azaleas that bloom through the same period. Nevertheless, it will be a nice project for some southern plantsman to study these plants and come up with a race or races that will in time approximate in variety and range of bloom the grand plants more commonly known in northern gardens.

### *Lavandula stoechas*

It is not often that a land is called after a plant but it is said the Stoechades Island off the southern coast of France was named after *Lavandula stoechas*. Gustave Hegi in *Illustrierte Flora von Mittel Europa* says it was used more than *L. latifolia*, or *L. officinalis*. After being dried, it was carried over the Alps and used as a medicine as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. It was called Stickadore in those days. In the Middle Ages it was one of the ingredients of the Vinegar of the Four Thieves, an historically known antidote against plagues.

The plant is native to the Mediterranean and I have seen it growing wild in Portugal. An English traveler reports in the *Gardener's Chronicle* of seeing fine forms of it with immense violet plumes in Crete. With me in southern New York, though it is a sturdy sub-shrub, it is not hardy, so I bring it indoors every winter. Also, it grows to eighteen inches or so high, but elsewhere it is said to reach a height of three feet. The leaves arch upward and are slender, downy and terminate in a point. The calyx is green and furry and so is the bract subtending it. It is reported that the calyx is occasionally white, pink or copper pink. The minute, dark purple, almost trumpet-shaped flowers grow in close heads an inch or more long.



Gottscho-Schleisner

### *Lavandula stoechas*

Out of the top of the flowering spike grows a tuft of narrow purple bracts with wavy margins. These bracts look like a bunch of bright feathers. The plant smells a little of turpentine and yet flowery. This plant can be grown from seed and increased very easily by cuttings. It blooms over a long time from middle to late summer.

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