

1994

\$1.00



Welcome to **OLD HOUSE GARDENS**,
North America's premier source for antique bulbs!

For over ten years I've worked as a landscape historian, researching and helping preserve historic landscapes and plants. During this time, hundreds of people have asked me, "What plants are right for our old house--or museum?" and "Where can we get them?" At the same time, unfortunately, many antique varieties have been disappearing from commerce.

Last year I launched this catalog as an effort to help preserve historic bulbs by making them--and information about them--more widely available.

The response was gratifying. Perfect strangers sent me hundreds of dollars! Though I discovered that selling antique bulbs is much more complicated than I had expected--and probably not the best way to get rich--I learned a lot, met some great people, had a lot of fun, and here I am back with an expanded list and even higher expectations.

I welcome your support--and appreciate last year's more than I can say.

Scott G. Kunst, Old House Gardens
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NARCISSUS

OR DAFFODILS.



Native mainly to the Mediterranean, narcissus were grown by the Egyptians and Greeks. At least one is considered native to England, and others were brought into gardens there by the 1500s.

In the 1600s and 1700s while thousands of

new tulips and hyacinths were being developed, the number of daffodils grew slowly. Of the 24,000 cultivars listed today in the RHS International Daffodil Checklist, a limited sampling suggests that maybe 50 date to the 1600s and another 350 were introduced before 1860--and very few of these were ever widely grown. But then in the mid-1800s a couple of British enthusiasts set to work and between 1860 and 1900 roughly 1000 new varieties were introduced. Another 6000, roughly, were introduced by 1930, making the early 20th century a Golden Age for daffodils. A tiny fraction of these are still available today.

WE ARE PROUD TO BE HANDLING ALL RETAIL SALES THIS YEAR FOR THE NARCISSUS OF SISTERS' BULB FARM.

These bulbs are raised in northern Louisiana by Celia Jones and Jan Jones Grigsby on the farm where their grandmother started growing bulbs in 1918. Some of the varieties they grow are so rare they are available nowhere else in North America.

Sisters' bulbs are especially adapted to the South, but most have grown well in my zone 5 garden (watch for cautionary notes on some below). The further you take them from their home in zone 8, however, the longer it will take them to settle in. Your patience will be rewarded.

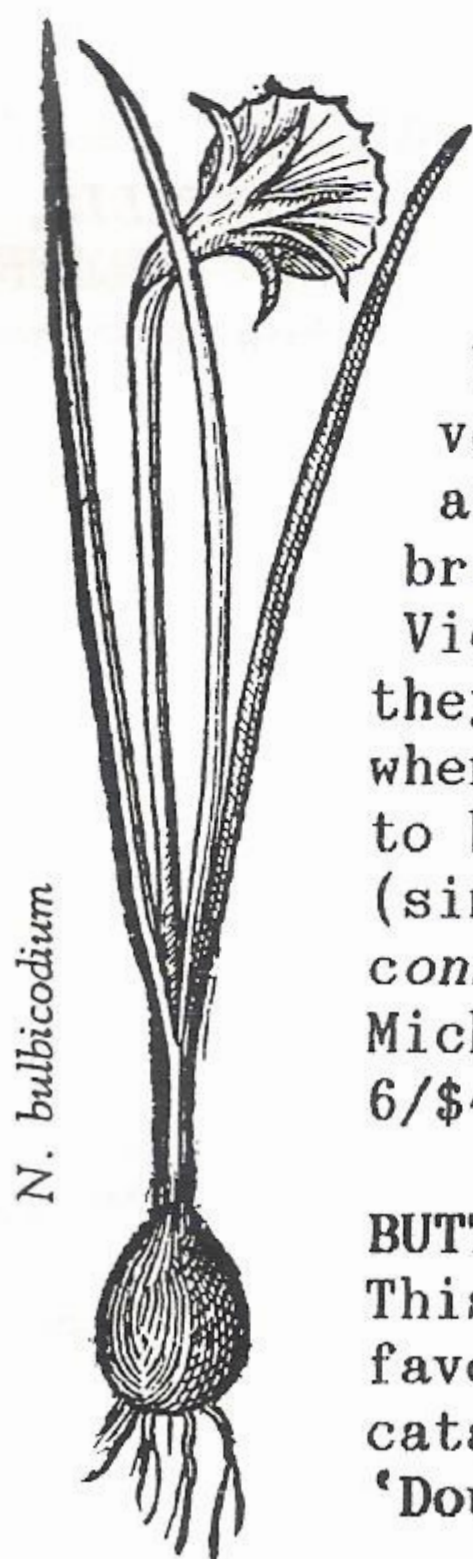
Conversely, many of our bulbs are from Dutch growers and may take some time adapting to Southern gardens. Our source for each bulb is noted.

WHAT DOES 4Y-Y MEAN? Narcissus are grouped into twelve classes based on their form and ancestry; ten are included here: 1 = trumpet, 2 = large cup, 3 = small cup, 4 = double, 5 = triandrus (pendent, petals swept back), 6 = cyclamineus (petals swept back), 7 = jonquilla (small cup, very fragrant), 8 = tazetta (small cup, bunch-flowered), 9 = poeticus (white petals, small cup), 10 = wild.

The first letter is the petal/perianth color; the other letters are the trumpet/cup colors: yellow, white, orange, red, green, pink. Most are 12-14 inches tall, with exceptions usually noted.

Our bulb sizes vary--species and older forms are often smaller--but we get the largest we can.

BERYL, 1907, 6W-O, Dutch - This nodding little beauty is an unusual cross of *N. cyclamineus* and *N. poeticus*. Its swept-back petals open yellow and age to almost white; its short cup is edged with orange. The great plantsman E.A. Bowles recommended it as "a particularly charming rock garden plant and good to pick for small vases." 7-9". 6/\$7.20
12/\$13.00 24/\$23.25 48/\$42.00



***N. BULBICODIUM BULBICODIUM*, "HOOP PETTICOAT,"** by 1629? 10Y-Y, Sisters - With their widely flaring cups and very narrow petals, "Hoop Petticoats" are odd and engaging. Short (6"), bright yellow, and early, they were a Victorian favorite for forcing. Outside, they hate being pampered, growing best when neglected in grass or rocks and left to bake in summer. Our sub-species (similar to the commonly offered *N. b. conspicuus*) was identified by U.K. expert Michael Salmon. Zones 6-9.
6/\$4.50 12/\$8.00 24/\$14.50 48/\$26.25

BUTTER AND EGGS, by 1777, 4Y-Y, Sisters - This two-tone yellow double, a vernacular favorite, was offered in most 19th-century catalogs. Also known as 'Golden Phoenix', 'Double Incomparabilis', and 'Aurantius

Plenus', it lacks the green streaks and often crude appearance of 'Van Sion'/'Telamonius Plenus', which is no substitute. We know of no one else who offers it.

3/\$4.50 6/\$8.00 12/\$14.50 24/\$26.25

CAMPERNELLE, *N. x ODORUS*, by 1601, 10Y-Y, Sisters - Southern bulb expert Scott Ogden calls this "the most common, desirable, and permanent of the yellow-blooming daffodils in Texas gardens." The same could be said for much of the South as well--for centuries. Since it reproduces by seeds as well as bulbs, expect a range of similar blossoms rather than identical clones. It's fragrant (*N. jonquilla* is one parent) and hardy to zone 6 (or warm spots in zone 5).

6/\$6.50 12/\$12.00 24/\$21.50 48/\$38.50

DOUBLE CAMPERNELLE, *N. x ODORUS* "PLENUS", by 1601, 10Y-Y, Dutch - A very old, widely planted double for zones 6-9. (It blooms in my zone 5 garden but increases very slowly.) Its small, deep yellow, wonderfully fragrant star-bursts dance atop wiry stems.

6/\$5.50 12/\$9.75 24/\$17.50 48/\$31.50



CHINESE SACRED LILY, *N. TAZETTA* v. *ORIENTALIS*, 1880s, 8W-Y, Dutch - Modern Israeli paperwhites may be wonderful, but for a true antique look, try forcing the "Chinese Sacred Lily" aka the "Lien Chu Lily" or "Jos Flower." All the rage in late-Victorian parlors, it was offered in U.S. catalogs by 1887 at least. It blooms in January in gardens of the Gulf Coast and Southern California. White petals, yellow cup, floppy foliage, fragrant.

3/\$4.50 6/\$8.00 12/\$14.50 24/\$26.25

CONSPICUOUS (=BARRII CONSPICUUS), 1869, 3Y-YYO, Dutch - For decades from the late 1800s into the early 1900s, 'Conspicuous' ranked as the most popular

of the Barrii or short-cup class. With light yellow petals and an orange-rimmed cup, it's still "a remarkable flower of great beauty," as nurseryman Peter Barr--the man they named the whole class after--wrote in 1884.

3/\$8.00 6/\$14.50
12/\$26.25 24/\$47.25

DICK WELLBAND, 1921, 2W-O, Sisters - Celia Jones says this "deeply romantic" flower with its "shimmering white petals and red-orange cup" speaks to her of "burning passion." It's also sturdy, fairly tall, blooms mid-season, and increases well--if any of that matters! Available nowhere else.

6/\$7.25 12/\$13.00 24/\$23.25 48/\$42.00

EMPEROR, 1865, 1Y-Y, Virginia - **SPECIAL PRICE!**

'Emperor' was the most popular late-Victorian daffodil, supplanted only by 'King Alfred' in the 1920s. Last year I described this sturdy trumpet as "gold and primrose," but a customer pointed out that "two shades of yellow" paints a truer picture. Since I located another U.S. grower I've been able to cut this year's price by two-thirds (and I'll be making up the difference to those who bought last year). It's a great bargain for a great rarity.

3/\$5.50 6/\$10.00 12/\$17.75 24/\$32.00

EMPRESS, 1865, 1W-Y, Sisters - Like 'Emperor', regal white and yellow 'Empress' was one of the first great achievements in Victorian daffodil breeding and a long-time favorite. I believe our Sisters-grown bulbs are the only ones being sold today, and they're in very short supply, so, please:

limit 1 per customer, \$6.00 per bulb.



Chinese Sacred Lily..or Jos flower

FRANCISCUS DRAKE, 1921, 2W-YYO, Sisters -To quote the 1931 John Scheepers catalog: "It is impossible to describe adequately the beauty of this unusual flower; the pure white perianth petals are... tinted gold at the base...; the cup, wide and deep, is golden yellow..., changing gradually to flame-orange at the densely frilled edge; the flowers... give the effect of a flock of white seagulls taking flight."
Available nowhere else, we believe; limited supply.
6/\$7.25 12/\$13.00 24/\$23.25 48/\$42.00

GOLDEN SPUR, 1885, 1Y-Y, Dutch - This late-Victorian yellow trumpet graced my garden for the first time this year, and I loved it. It blooms very early, looking like 'King Alfred' before he started pumping iron. Once a major forcing variety, it's reportedly an excellent naturalizer, too.
3/\$8.00 6/\$14.25 12/\$25.75 24/\$46.25

N. JONQUILLA, SINGLE JONQUIL, by 1612, 10Y-Y, Sisters - Celia calls this "the sweetest smelling flower your grandmother had in her garden." They won't survive winters colder than zone 6--alas!--but further south "Sweeties" are treasured. Clusters of small-cupped yellow flowers with rush-like foliage.
6/\$4.50 12/\$8.00 24/\$14.50 48/\$26.25

KING ALFRED, 1899, 1Y-Y, Virginia - TRUE STOCK!?!
Though millions of bulbs labeled 'King Alfred' are sold every year, most authorities agree that virtually none of them are the true 'King' but various impostors that have been substituted over the years. Our U.S. grower bought his original stock in the 1950s from a neighboring farmer who had been growing them since before 1920. We believe they're true and are having them appraised by experts. We'll refund if we're wrong!
6/\$6.75 12/\$12.00 24/\$21.50 48/\$38.75

LAURENS KOSTER, 1906, 8W-Y, Dutch - Mention 'Laurens Koster' to gardeners who know it and chances are they'll rave about its fragrance. It's also one of the oldest available poetazes (*N. poeticus* x *N. tazetta*), a robust, bunch-flowered beauty with tiny yellow-orange cups. Best in zones 6-8.
6/\$7.25 12/\$13.00 24/\$23.25 48/\$42.00

MARY COPELAND, 1914, 4W-0, Dutch - The creamy petals of this vigorous, now-vanishing double are interspersed with shorter petals of lemon and deep orange. It's best in the North; in my garden it's a star!

6/\$6.75	12/\$12.25	24/\$22.25	48/\$40.00
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N. x MEDIOLUTEUS (= *N. BIFLORUS*), by 1597, 10W-Y, Sisters - This is the "Common White" or "Primrose Peerless" of Gerard (1597). Naturalized at old sites throughout the South, its names there include "April Beauty," "Twin Sisters," and "Cemetery Ladies." Very late, best in zones 6-8. Sisters-grown, rarely offered in commerce, and priced 40% below last year!

6/\$6.50	12/\$12.00	24/\$21.50	48/\$38.50
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NARCISSUS POETICUS

MRS. ERNST H. KRELAGE, 1912, 1W-W, Dutch - This beauty named for the wife of one of Holland's great bulb-growers has creamy-white petals with a big yellow trumpet that fades to near white. Stump and Walter's 1933 catalog praised it as "one of the finest..., very free flowering..., splendid."

6/\$7.50	12/\$13.50
24/\$25.50	48/\$44.00

MRS. R.O. BACKHOUSE, 1923, 2W-P, Dutch - The first--and known for decades as THE--pink daffodil, 'Mrs. Backhouse' is more truly

ivory and apricot. It's luscious and intriguing nonetheless, and becoming scarce. Its many fans made it one of our best-sellers last year.

6/\$7.25	12/\$13.00	24/\$23.25	48/\$42.00
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PHEASANT'S EYE, *N. POETICUS RECURVUS*, 1600s? early 1800s? 10W-YYR, Dutch - Though varieties of *N. poeticus* are pictured in the English herbals of about 1600, this form--the oldest available--seems to date only to the early 1800s. (Don't be fooled by catalogs

that call 'Actaea' the "Old Pheasant's Eye." It dates to 1927!) My research continues; can you help? It's a fine old flower in any case, with sparkling white petals and a tiny, red-rimmed cup, blooming very late. It likes even moisture and cool springs.

6/\$8.00 12/\$14.50 24/\$26.25 48/\$47.25

N. PSEUDONARCISSUS, by 1570? 10Y-Y, Sisters - *N. pseudonarcissus* could be called the original yellow trumpet daffodil. There are many forms; all have long trumpets and slightly twisted, "dog-eared" (forward-tilted) petals--definitely antique. They're the first blooms of daffodil season and tough enough to naturalize anywhere--even in pine shade in Louisiana.

6/\$4.50 12/\$8.00 24/\$14.50 48/\$26.25

SIR WATKIN, 1884, 2Y-Y, Sisters - Though a bit tall, the "Welsh Giant" no longer seems a giant--just handsome and vigorous. It's a long-standard, well-loved variety, with an especially long-lasting golden cup and sulphur perianth. If anyone else offers it, we haven't heard of it. Nonetheless, we've been able to cut our price by 40% this year.

3/\$9.75 6/\$17.50 12/\$31.50 24/\$57.00

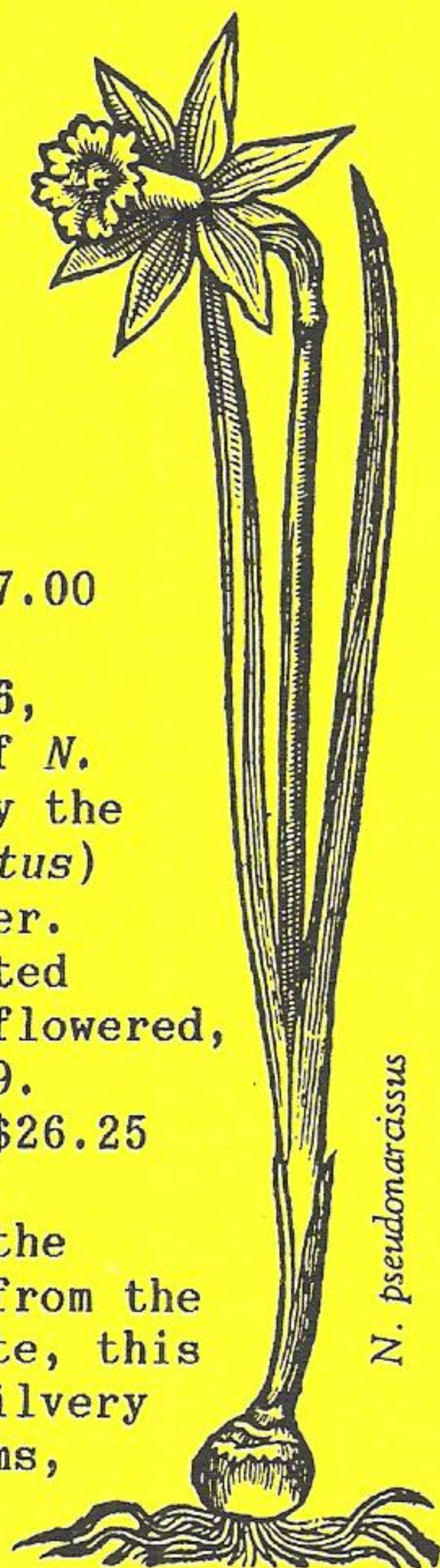
"TEXAS STAR," *N. x INTERMEDIUS*, by 1816, 10Y-Y, Sisters - This natural hybrid of *N. jonquilla* and *N. tazetta* was painted by the great Redoute before 1816 (as *N. radiatus*) and was probably in gardens much earlier. Lighter yellow than jonquils, its pointed petals do make it look starry. Multi-flowered, sturdy, stocky, and fragrant; zones 7-9.

6/\$4.50 12/\$8.00 24/\$14.50 48/\$26.25

W.P. MILNER, 1869, 1W-W, Dutch - Note the corrected date (not last year's 1884) from the RHS Classified List. Described as white, this vigorous miniature is actually pale, silvery yellow. With elfin trumpets on 8" stems, it's one of my favorites.

6/\$6.50

12/\$11.75 24/\$21.00 48/\$37.75



Good Groups to Join

If you want to learn more about historic plants and landscapes--and support their preservation--join some of these groups. I belong to them all and find them invaluable.

New England Garden History Society, 300 Massachusetts, Boston, MA 02115, (617) 536-9280. Newsletter, journal, tours, of national interest, \$45.

Southern Garden History Society, Drawer F, Salem Stn., Winston-Salem, NC 27108. Newsletter, journal, meetings, of national interest, \$20.

Heritage Rose Group, Miriam Wilkins, 925 Galvin Dr., El Cerrito, CA 94530, (510) 526-6960. Regional sub-groups, instructive newsletter, \$5.

Historic Iris Preservation Soc., Ada Godfrey, 9 Bradford St., Foxborough, MA 02035, (508) 543-2711. Newsletter, plant-finding service, etc., \$5.

American Daffodil Society, Mary Lou Gripshover, 1686 Grey Fox, Milford, OH 45150, journal, meeting, \$20. Little on antiques, but I direct an ADS letter-writing round-robin on them. Join us?

National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens, The Pines, Wisley Garden, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB, international leader, 6 pounds.

Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society, see address in the Tulip section of this catalog.

Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, 82 Wall St., #1105, NY, NY 10005. For professionals, \$25. I'm on the board of directors, so feel free to call me for more information.

What Happened to May???

Yes, you're getting this catalog late (okay, very late), but so is everyone else. Forgive me! April and May swamped me. Next year I'm starting on it in January, I swear. My wife and sons will be happier, too.

Once more: THANKS to all of you who helped make 1993 a good first year for OHG by sending your orders, feedback, and encouragement. I look forward to furthering our partnership--and friendships--in 1994.