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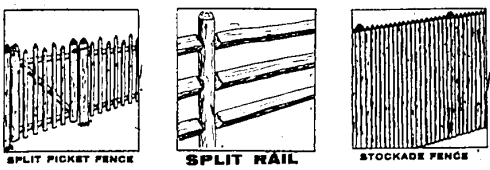
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Tips on Gardening



By Betty Frankel

NARCISSUS
Narcissus, according to Greek mythology, was a beautiful youth who drew the vengeance of the gods because he spurned the love of the nymph Echo. He fell in love with his own reflection seen in the waters of a spring and pined away. The flower that bears his name sprang up on the spot where he died.

It is true that many species of narcissi grow wild in the Mediterranean region, in central Europe, and a few species are to be found eastward through Asia to China and Japan. They are among the oldest of cultivated flowers and many diverse forms and varieties have been developed.

They are members of the Amaryllidaceae family and have flowers composed of six spreading petals joined into a slender tube in which are six stamens. Surrounding the edge of the tube is a "cup" or "corona" which gives the flowers their special character. In some cases the corona is the same color as the six "perianth" petals, while in others it is a brilliant contrast. The Royal Horticultural Society of England has adopted a classification that separates the many kinds into eleven major groups. The classification is based on the proportionate size of the corona and on the number of flowers on each stem.

The trumpet narcissi, also known as daffodils, have the largest corona. They are the type sold by florists and are frequently planted in the garden. Most popular of all daffodils is the golden yellow "King Alfred." "Beersheba" is a beautiful pure white. Among the newer developments in this group are those with white perianth and apricot pink trumpet, such as "Pink Supreme" and "Mrs. R. O. Backhouse."

The medium trumpet daffodils are also known as "Incomparable Daffodils." There are two types. Some have a short, broad "crown" while others have a smaller, shallow "cup." They are ideal for the garden, growing well in either sun or semi-shade. Fireball, with its white perianth and scarlet-orange cup is one of the loveliest in this group.

Poet's daffodils are a group with a rich spicy fragrance and a flat, highly colored cup. They include the "Pheasant's Eye," an old garden favorite that is an excellent cut flower. Poet's daffodils are similar but have a cluster of flowers on each stem.

Jonquils are dainty narcissi with rush-like or grass-like leaves. Two or more flowers, which are delightfully scented, are clustered at the end of the stem. They are charming little flowers that are especially suited for planting in the rock garden or naturalizing but may also be used in borders or freed in pots indoors. They are good cut flowers, having excellent keeping qualities. The term jonquil is sometimes used to refer to any daffodil or narcissus, but botanically belongs only to this group.

In addition to these better known types there are also double daffodils, and a variety of miniature narcissi, including the charming yellow Hoop-Petticoat narcissus, the cyclamen-flowered daffodil, and the exquisite white Angel's Tears (Narcissus triandrus albus). Paper white narcissus, so popular for forcing in the house, is a so-called Tazetta type.

These gay spring flowers are easy to grow. They thrive in ordinary garden soil and may be planted in beds or naturalized in grassy areas or in woodland. The bulbs should be planted in early fall. The depth and distance apart depends on the size of the bulbs. Large bulbs should be covered with five inches of soil, while small ones need only two or three inches of covering. Bulbs should be planted more deeply in light, sandy soil.

After flowering, it is essential that the foliage be left until it is yellow and detaches easily from the bulb. It may be tied

New Siding Perks Up Old Houses

If you think a new dress can do wonders for a woman who feels she's growing older, you'd be amazed what it can do for a middle-aged house.

A woman dressed by 1936 standards would look drab today—just as many fine and structurally sound houses built just a few decades ago look drab now.

Many owners of older homes have turned to re-siding as the surest way to strip years from their homes' appearance. In the process, they've eliminated burdensome maintenance chores.

A new exterior of mineral fiber siding, for example, will add a bright, fresh appearance to a dull-looking home that will last many years.

Mineral fiber's textured surface is pre-finished with a long-lasting plastic acrylic color coating that can be restored periodically simply by washing it down.

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Re-siding makes real economic sense for many homeowners. By adding up the estimated costs for painting (most houses need repainting every three to five years), and comparing with cost of re-siding, it can be shown that the "expense" is a savings.

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