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Narcissus jonquilla

JONQUIL is a bulbous perennial. Native to southern Europe and North Africa (particularly Algeria) it has very fragrant, greenish-yellow and deep yellow flowers.

It is also known as *Jonkvilo* (Esperanto), *Jonquille* (German), *Junquillo* (Portuguese), *Junquillo* (Spanish), Lily of Mary, *Narcis okolíkatý* (Czech), Narcissus, Queen Anne's jonquil, Rush daffodil, and Wild jonquil; and in flower language is said to be a symbol of 'can you return my love?', desire, evening fragrance, 'I desire a return of affection', 'I desire your affection', and longing.

Warning – the whole plant (particularly the bulb) is poisonous. It can cause abdominal pain, dizziness, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, convulsions, trembling and death. It is poisonous for animals too.

Jonquilla is a corruption of a common Spanish name for this species *junquillo* which itself is derived from Latin *juncus* (rush) with reference to the appearance of the leaves.

Jonquils were introduced to Britain in the 16th Century from the Iberian peninsular and after the crushing defeat of the French army at Blenheim in 1704 Queen Anne (1665-1714) rewarded John Churchill (1650-1722), the 1st Duke of Marlborough, by arranging for double jonquils to be planted out in the gardens of his Oxfordshire palace at Blenheim. Its fragrant flowers yield a sweet-smelling, yellow oil that is used by the French perfumery industry.

It is the birthday flower for 12th September and it is associated with the month of March.