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Narcissus poeticus

[Synonyms : *Narcissus majalis*, *Narcissus ornatus*]

POET'S NARCISSUS is a bulbous perennial. Native from France to Greece it has fragrant yellow or white flowers with a red-edged, yellow trumpet.

It is also known as *Dichternarzisse* (German), *Fior-maggi* (Italian), *Gartennarzisse* (German), *Goute dé sang* (Channel Islander-Guernsey), *Gylfinog Farddol* (Welsh), *Narcis biely* (Slovak), *Narcis bílý* (Czech), *Narciso poeta* (Esperanto), *Narcisse-des-poetes* (French), Pheasant's eye, Pheasant's eye daffodil, Pheasant's eye narcissus, *Pingstlilja* (Swedish), Poeticus daffodil, Poet's daffodil, *Weisse Gartennarzisse* (German), *Weisse Narzisse* (German), Whitsun lily, and *Zerrinkadeh* (Turkish).

Warning – the plant is as poisonous as others of the narcissus family, but some believe it is more powerful. In a confined space the penetrating scent is said to have caused headaches and vomiting.

Poeticus means 'of poets'.

Poet's narcissus was familiar over 2200 years ago as it is referred to by the ancient Greek philosopher, Theophrastus (c.372-c.287 BC) in his writings.

Christened 'poet's narcissus' it does not seem to be easy to trace poetry specifically written for this species although authorities do believe that the English writer and lyric poet, Shelley (1792-1822) was directing his thoughts to this plant particularly when he wrote

The pied windflowers and the tulip tall,
And Narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die at their own dear loveliness.

Medicinally, the bulb is used today in homoeopathic treatments.