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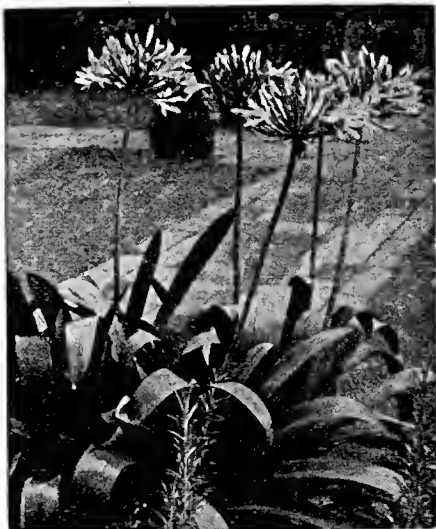
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South African Flowers

By SYDNEY B. MITCHELL

SUNSET MAGAZINE - AUGUST 1931

(Reprinted through the courtesy of the Publishers)



Agapanthus Umbellatus Albus



Clivia Miniata

Last summer, while we were enjoying a lovely garden on the South Downs facing the English Channel, the owner, a London banker, told my wife that such was the interest of the English amateur in new plants it was possible in a few hours to get subscriptions or shares enough to send a plant explorer to the Himalayas, to western China or to Chile. This is doubtless partly due to the very real devotion of the English business and professional man to an absorbing hobby and his perfect willingness to spend some money to increase the range of plant materials for his garden.

In time, perhaps, we on the Pacific Coast may grow up horticulturally to the point where we send out plant exploring expeditions. When this comes Californian gardeners will doubtless want the first expedition to go to South Africa, because climatically this region is so close to ours in its rainy and dry seasons, and because its flora is most varied and abounds in beautiful bulbs and annuals. It is of the former that I now propose to write, because they are so perfectly adapted to our gardens, as is any bulbous plant which dies down and rests in summer when we ourselves want to rest from continuous gardening and watering. Furthermore, they give us variety and novelty not possible in gardens of colder climates, and variety is the spice of gardening as well as of life.

Freesias

Of the smaller South African bulbs, doubtless the best known and most popular is the fragrant freesia, easily grown outdoors in gardens near the coast in California, but better given greenhouse treatment in colder climates. Time was when we had only a few species and gardens rarely showed anything but *F. refracta* in its pure white or yellow-blotched forms. The former has now been superseded by the far finer white, Purity, with larger flowers on longer stems, but more important still is the series of handsome hybrids, largely raised in southern California, which has extended the color range to pure yellow (California), salmon (Carmencita), carmine red (Olivette), blue (Amethyst) and many other shades now offered separately as well as in mixtures.

Freesia bulbs are best planted early, as early as September, though they can be put in from then till November. Select a warm sunny place and light sandy soil (if yours is heavy, lighten it with sand or humus) and place the little bulbs, which somewhat suggest teeth, points down, about two or three inches under the surface and about the same distance apart. They flower in early spring.

Tritonias

Visitors to my garden in late April or early May nearly all exclaim at a patch of what looks to them like a big, tomato-red freesia. It is really one of the brilliant forms of *Tritonia crocata*—there are others more pinkish or more orange than mine—another South African bulb related to the freesia but of even easier culture, asking only for a place in the sun, planting two inches deep, and being allowed to dry out completely in summer. The

salmon reds or corals give a fine color note in the garden, especially in a mass where they have been allowed to remain and increase.

Ixias and Sparaxis

I always thinks of ixias and sparaxis together, though they are readily distinguishable. Taking sparaxis first, because they seem nearer to freesias and tritonias, we find the ones in commerce in America to be forms of *S. tricolor*, suggesting baby gladiolus in growth but flowering in mid-April or earlier, with several gay colored flowers on each foot-high stem.

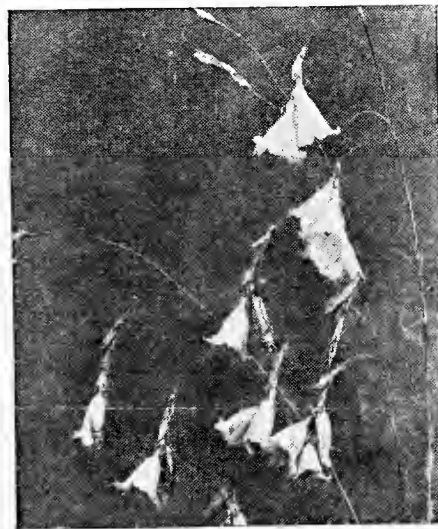
Baboon Flower

Still another of these South African irids is the babiana or baboon flower, so named because that animal eats the bulbs. It is a somewhat huskier grower and, because it generally runs to blue shades, it is sometimes referred to as a blue freesia. Those I have seen or grown have all been blues or magentas and, I think, inferior to ixias or sparaxis in garden value, but there are finer ones, *B. rubro-cyanea*, blue with a red center, which intrigue me in description, and still others, white, yellow and scarlet, of which only seed is available to us. The culture of all these bulbs in coastal California is as easy as that of freesias, but the little corms, like miniature gladiolus, need not be planted until October or November.

Watsonias

The watsonias, taller and tougher relatives of our garden gladiolus, are hardly known in comparison with them. Though unquestionably flowers of the future because of their vigor, ease of culture, and early flowering, they have not yet really arrived. Like the gladiolus, they are grown from corms, and make sword-like leaves as high as three feet, with considerably taller thin, rigid, branched flower spikes. Where only a few degrees of frost are met they should be planted in early autumn, preferably by September, about four or five inches deep, in any good garden soil, and in sunshine rather than shade. As they make all growth during our rains, they need practically no attention unless the season is very dry.

After flowering, watsonias may be allowed to ripen or dry off and, when dormant, they can be lifted and divided. Unless crowded, however, this step is not necessary, for in my own garden and in others I know they have been left for years to grow into clumps. Their ease of growth, their usual season of flowering, after the irises and before the general run of summer flowers, successive blooming of the side shoots, the wide range of colors in the newer hybrids, all commend them to us. The beautiful pure white species (variously called *Watsonia alba* and *Iridifolia alba*, O'Brieni or Ardernei) has flowered in our garden for many Mays, but the fine new hybrids raised by Mrs. J. H. Bullard of Los Angeles in salmon rose, mauve, orange scarlet, flesh pink, coral and cream are just as easy to grow and now that they are in commerce will soon be popular.

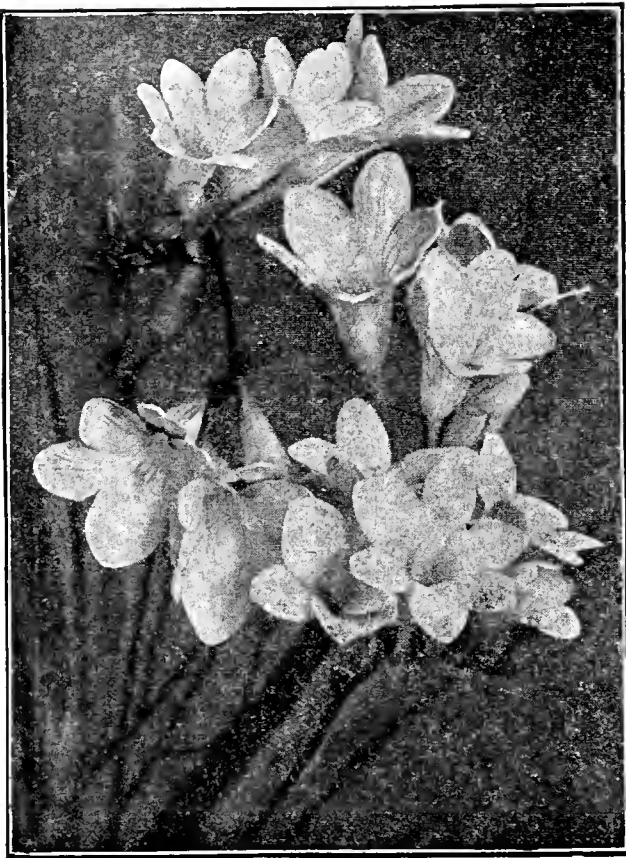


Dierama



Gladiolus Tristis Concolor

Other South African Bulbs Not



Freesia Hybrid



Gladiolus Cardinalis Elegans



Moraea Glaucoptis

AGAPANTHUS (African Lily)
UMBELLATUS (Blue Lily of the Nile). Lovely Summer and Fall flowering plant of the Lily family, bearing a large number of beautiful flowers in umbels, on long stems. Has long blooming period. Desirable for indoor decoration. Requires protection where winters are severe. Can be grown in tubs for conservatory or terrace.

AMARYLLIS (Belladonna Major)
 Lovely Lily-like flowers, shading from delicate pink to pale rose. Tall stems, no foliage while blooming, therefore combines exquisitely with blue Agapanthus which blooms at the same time, providing foliage. This combination makes an effective clump or striking border. In the warm sections of the South and on the Pacific Coast the bulbs bloom freely out of doors and should be planted with the tops even with or a little above ground. Pot culture is suggested for colder sections.

ANOMATHECA
JUNCEA. Dainty little rose-scarlet flowers with Freesia-like foliage. Blooms in the early part of June. A group of these will be just the thing for the rock garden.

ANTHOLYZA
PANICULATA. Red yellow flowers similar to Watsonias both in appearance and culture.

ARISTEA
 Fibrous-rooted Irids, much prized in South Africa, where they are native. Beautiful blue flowers on tall stems, 2 to 6 feet. Habit of Moraea iridioides, but much larger. Stock limited.

CLIVIA (Imantophyllum)
MINIATA. Amaryllis-like plants with handsome evergreen foliage and large umbels of flowers of bright scarlet with yellow throat. A native of South Africa and named for a duchess of Northumberland and member of the Clive family. Make excellent house plants; spring flowering.

CRINUM
 Although Crinums are tropical plants, they do well in this climate when given some protection. Plant with about two-thirds of bulb projecting above ground level except campanulatum, which should be covered. In cold climates, must be taken inside in winter. May be planted in tubs or large pots.

DIERAMA (Wedding Bells)
PULCHERRIMA. A lovely species of Sparaxis from the Cape of Good Hope. Height about 6 feet. Dainty bell-shaped, rose-colored flowers hang on slender stems, which arch gracefully.

EUCOMIS (Pineapple Lily)
PUNCTATA. Half-hardy Cape bulb producing rosettes of long leaves and a strong scape or stock, bearing a raceme of whitish flowers in the Summer, which are crowned with a crest of leafy bracts similar in shape to the topknot on a pineapple. It is from this leafy crown that the name is suggested. In warm climates let the bulbs remain where planted in the open. Treat as a houseplant in the East.

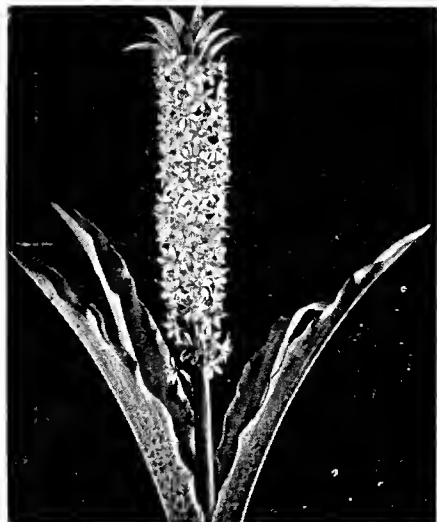
GLADIOLUS SPECIES
 The greater part of the improved garden forms of Gladiolus are derived indirectly from South African species, of which there are over a hundred now known, which are unique both in shape and color.

HOMERIA
 African bulbs, bearing yellow or orange flowers with large blotch. This summer flowering bulb is of the Sparaxis family, requiring the same culture, but is more closely related to the Herbertia, Moraea and Tigridia. Should be grown in a sunny, sheltered location and be well mulched.

LACHENALIA (Cape Cowslip)
 Small South African bulbs that easily flower in a cool greenhouse or windowbox in the early spring. Similar in shape to a miniature Hyacinth. Bloom freely over a long period of time.

Culture: Plant 5 or 6 bulbs in a 6-inch pot, in good, rich, well drained loam. Store in protected cold-frame until late November, then bring into conservatory or place in sunny window. Give plenty of water and occasionally liquid manure. After foliage dies down keep dry until following Autumn.

MORAEA
 Charming plants native to the Cape of Good Hope, are allied to the Iris and require the same treatment. The flowers resemble the Iris somewhat but the standards are absent. In color they are white, shading to a light golden yellow in the center and with occasional touches of purple.



Eucomis Punctata



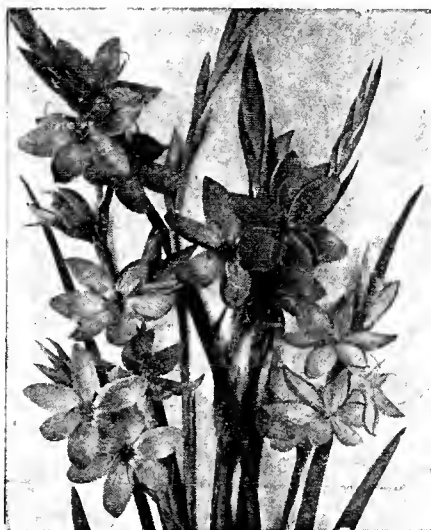
The unusual plant pictured here is another South African importation—Golden Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum aureum*). It was grown in Portland; exhibited at the San Francisco Flower Show and then in Peninsula garden shows until the bloom was gone. Rightfully the plant has attracted Coast-wide attention.

**SOUTH AFRICAN BULBS GROWN BY
 GORDON AINSLEY, CAMPBELL, CALIF.**

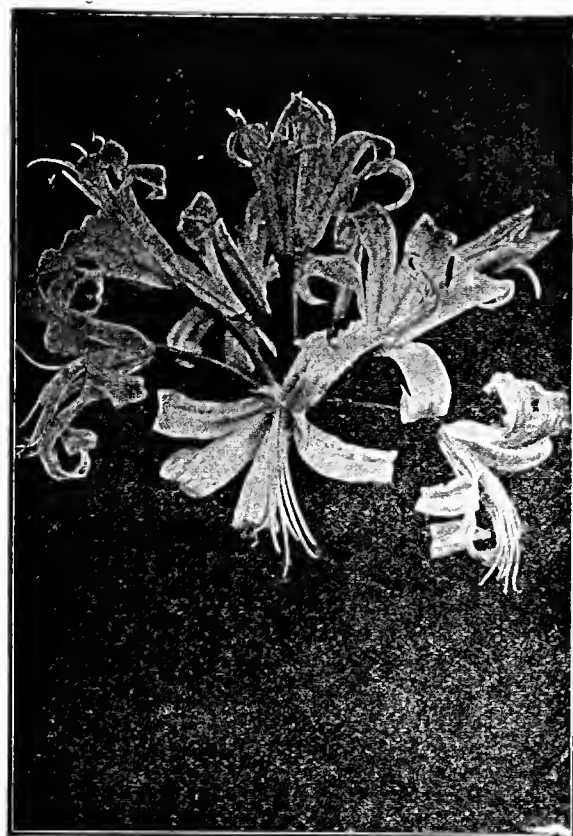
Included in Mr. Mitchell's Article



Nerine Sarniensis



Schizostylis



Nerine Hybrid

NERINE

Cape bulbs of the Amaryllis family. Very closely related to Amaryllis belladonna, but of more dwarf habit. Culture is exactly the same, forming leaves in the winter, resting dry in the summer and blooming in the fall, before leaves start.

SCHIZOSTYLIS (Kaffir Lily)

COCCINEA. Native to South Africa. Beautiful flowers of crimson scarlet, blooming during the autumn months. Prefers full sun and requires plenty of water from June to flowering season. Can be grown in pots for the conservatory.

VALLOTA (Scarborough Lily)

PURPUREA. A native of South Africa and one of the most attractive of the Amaryllis family. Many flowers of bright red color. Same culture as Amaryllis. Very scarce.

VELTHEIMIA

VRIDIFOLIA. Cape bulb. Many long glossy green leaves, wavy on the edge. From the center

of these leaves appears a stout stem 1½ feet high, topped with a dense spike of 25 or 30 flowers of a delicate old rose shade. Requires a shady location.

WACHENDORFFIA

THYRSIFLORA. A streamside evergreen plant of the Lily family. (Was formerly included in the suppressed family Haemodoraceae, or "blood-root" family, as evidenced by its scarlet roots.) Flowers yellow and russet, star-shaped, on tall stems. Foliage Tigridia-like, in dense clumps. Thrives in any moist situation.

ZANTEDESCHIA (Calla Lily)

The so-called Richardia or Calla Lilies strictly speaking are all "Zantedeschia" after Francisco Zantedeschi, an Italian botanist. The only true "Calla" being C. Palustris, a native species of some of the Eastern States. These desirable plants are of easy culture, and can be used with good effect for outdoor planting, in mild climates, or are suitable for potted plants.



Vallota Purpurea

PRICE LIST of SOUTH AFRICAN BULBS Grown by GORDON AINSLEY, CAMPBELL, CALIF.

AGAPANTHUS (African Lily)

Umbellatus—blue. Each 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Umbellatus albus. Each, \$1.00.

AMARYLLIS BELLADONNA MAJOR. Large size bulbs: Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50. Medium size: Each, 20c; Doz., \$2.00.

ANOMATHECA JUNCEA. Rose-scarlet. Each, 20c; Doz., \$2.00.

ANTHOLYZA PANICULATA. Each, 10c; Doz., \$1.00.

BABIANA STRICTA. Mixed colors. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

CLIVIA MINIATA. Salmon. Each, \$1.00.

CRINUM LONGIFOLIUM. White with pink mid-rib. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

List of other species on request.

DIERAMA PULCHERRIMA. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

EUCOMIS PUNCTATA. Each, \$1.50.

FREESIAS

Aurora. Large flowering yellow suffused with buff shading on lower petals.

Buttercup. Large yellow with deep throat.

California. Large bright golden yellow.

Carmencita. Large orange salmon hue with orange.

Carrie Budau. Lavender pink, improved General Pershing.

General Pershing. Yellow and pink.

Ilena. Rosy lavender with white throat, deep orange blotch on lower petals.

Olivette. Bright carmine red with light yellow throat lower petals having deep yellow throat with crimson veins.

Splendens. Large flower, lavender violet, strong grower.

Yellow Prince. Fine long stem, orange.

Rainbow Mixture. All colors.

Above varieties—Each, 10c; Doz., 75c; 100, \$4.75.



Watsonia Hybrid

(Continued on next page)

CULTURAL DIRECTIONS FOR EASTERN STATES

While South African bulbs thrive in warm climates, they will also grow satisfactorily in the East, if given some protection during the winter. They may be started in pots, containing rich but well drained soil, which can then be set out in the garden after the weather becomes warm or can be forced gently in a cool greenhouse with satisfactory results. Satisfactory results may also be obtained by growing the bulbs in a protected coldframe.

For speed and getting just what you want, plant bulbs, but remember still that all watsonias come easily from seed and flower the second season after showing. Here is a field for the California amateur, to get all the available species from South African seed, then cross and select from them so that we may have watsonias all the way from two to five feet in height, in many colors and with a season of flowering almost through the garden year.

PRICE LIST of SOUTH AFRICAN BULBS

Grown by GORDON AINSLEY, Campbell, Calif. U. S. Department of Agriculture.



Crinum Longifolium

GLADIOLUS

Cardinalis Elegans. Salmon with white throat. Each, 50c.

Tristis Concolor (Fragrant Gladiolus). Cream. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

HOMERIA ELEGANS. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

LACHENALIA (Cape Cowslip)

Luteola. Citron and green. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Orchioides. White and green. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

PUSTULATA. White tinted green. Foliage has tiny pustules. Unique. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Tricolor. Purple, yellow and green. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.50.

MORAEA

Bicolor. Yellow with purple blotch. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

Glaukopis (Peacock Iris). White with blue blotch on each petal. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Iridioides Johnsoni. White shaded yellow. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Iridioides (Dwarf type). White marked yellow and blue. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

MORPHIXIA PANICULATA. Star-shaped flowers of a buff-cream with long slender rosy buff-colored tube. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.50.

NERINE

Curvifolia. Scarlet with crystalline-like sheen. Each, \$1.50.

Sarniensis (The Guernsey Lily). Red. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.00.

Mixed Hybrids. Pink, orange and salmon. Each, \$1.50; Doz., \$15.00.

ORNITHOGALUM

Aureum (Golden Star of Bethlehem). Orange. Each, \$1.00.

Lacteam (The Chinchinchee). Satiny white with primrose yellow anthers. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Umbellatum (Star of Bethlehem). Dwarf, white. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.50.

SCHIZOSTYLIS COCCINEA. Crimson scarlet. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

SPARAXIS

Ariadne. White, exterior violet. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

Fire King. Brilliant scarlet, yellow center. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

Honneur de Haarlem. Cerise, center black and yellow. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.50.

Jeannette. Soft rose, white eye. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

Leopold. Creamy white with few violet markings. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.50.

Mixed varieties. Doz., 50c; 100, \$3.75.

TRITONIA (LAPEYRCUSIA)

Prince of Orange. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

Salmon King. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

VALLOTA (Scarborough Lily). **Purpurea.** Bright red. Each, 75c; Doz., \$7.50.

VELTHEIMIA VIRIDIFOLIA. Rose. Each, 75c; Doz., \$7.50.

WATSONIAS

Cream Cup. White with cream shading. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Diana. Lilac-mauve. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Ed. Sturtevant. Orange red. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Fanny Lyon. Apricot buff. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

Harry Johnson. Salmon pink. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Hazel. Salmon-pink, orange stripe through petals. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

James MacGillivray. Begonia rose. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Lilian Benner. Rosy mauve. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Marion Welsh. Coppery-red. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Madame Modjeska. Deep magenta. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

Mrs. J. J. Dean. Rose pink. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Victory. Salmon-red. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Mixed Varieties. Doz., \$1.00.

WATSONIA SPECIES

Alba. Pure white. Each, 10c; Doz., 75c.

Augusta. Scarlet. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Brevifolius. Pink. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Bulbifera. Orange-red. Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Densiflora. Rose. Each, 50c; Doz., \$5.00.

Rosea. Rosy-lavender. Each, 15c; Doz., \$1.25.

ZANTEDESCHIA (Calla Lily)

Aethiopica (Lily of the Nile). White. Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50.

Albo-Maculata. Ivory-white. Each, 30c; Doz., \$3.00.

Elliottiana. Yellow. Medium size: Each, 25c; Doz., \$2.50. Large size: Each, 35c; Doz., \$3.50.

Rehmanni. Pink. Low growing. Each, \$1.00; Doz., \$10.00.

COLLECTION S-25—Seven varieties of South African bulbs. 6 each: Babiana, Homeria, Lapeyrousia, Moraea Glaukopis, Sparaxis, Tritonia, Morphixia—suitable for rock garden, \$4.25 postpaid. One-half collection (21 bulbs), \$2.25 postpaid.

COLLECTION S-26—Seven varieties of South African bulbs. 6 each: Agapanthus, Aristeia, Crinum, Dierama, Moraea Iridioides, Schizostylis Coccinea, Zantedeschia (Aethiopica)—suitable for edge of water garden. Whole collection, \$12.25 postpaid. One-half collection (3 each), \$6.25. 1 each of above 7 varieties, \$2.25 postpaid.

WRITE YOUR ORDER ON THIS SHEET

Name.....

Street.....

Post Office.....

State.....

Remittance enclosed for \$.....

Simply check off the items required. Fill in your name and address on the right and send to us with your remittance.

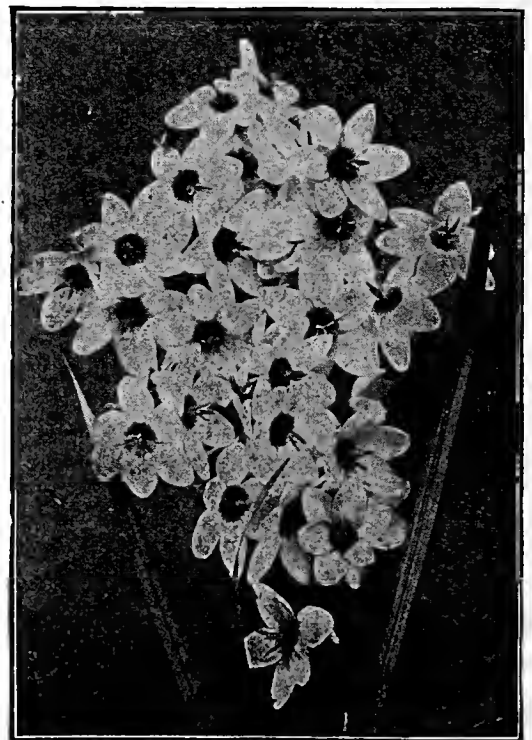
Address:

**Gordon Ainsley
Campbell, Calif.**

Postage paid on orders for \$2.00 or over. On orders for less than \$2.00, please add 25 cents to help pay for postage and packing.

PLEASE NOTE

South African Bulbs are easily grown from seed, many flowering the first or second year after planting. I can supply seed of most of the bulbs in this folder; also many others. I will be glad to send a list of them on request.



Ixia