

JEMIMA'S GARDEN

This is the time of year when I anxiously await the arrival of the fall Cruickshank catalogue. Anxiously, because it tends to be late arriving and I'm a person who pores over catalogues. I make a preliminary list and then have to go over it again and again cutting it down to an affordable size. Cruickshanks fall catalogue is special because it's the bulb catalogue and I think the flowers that grow from bulbs are my favourites. I realize that bulbs can be purchased many places with satisfying results but Cruickshanks have an enormous selection of tulips, narcissi, tiny spring iris, crocus, snowdrops, scilla and on and on. The catalogue is full of valuable information about each species and variety such as time of bloom, height, and whether or not it makes a good forcing choice. The first time I saw scillas was the first spring I lived in Kingston. We were living in a big, old house on Queen's campus where Victoria Hall now stands. There was a lilac hedge down one side of the front lawn and suddenly one spring day under that hedge and throughout the lawn was a brilliant blue. Small bulbs are so effective when planted in masses but quite possibly this expanse of blue started out as a small patch under the lilacs. Tulips will last longer with optimum size bloom if planted deeply - that is 10" from the bottom of the bulb.

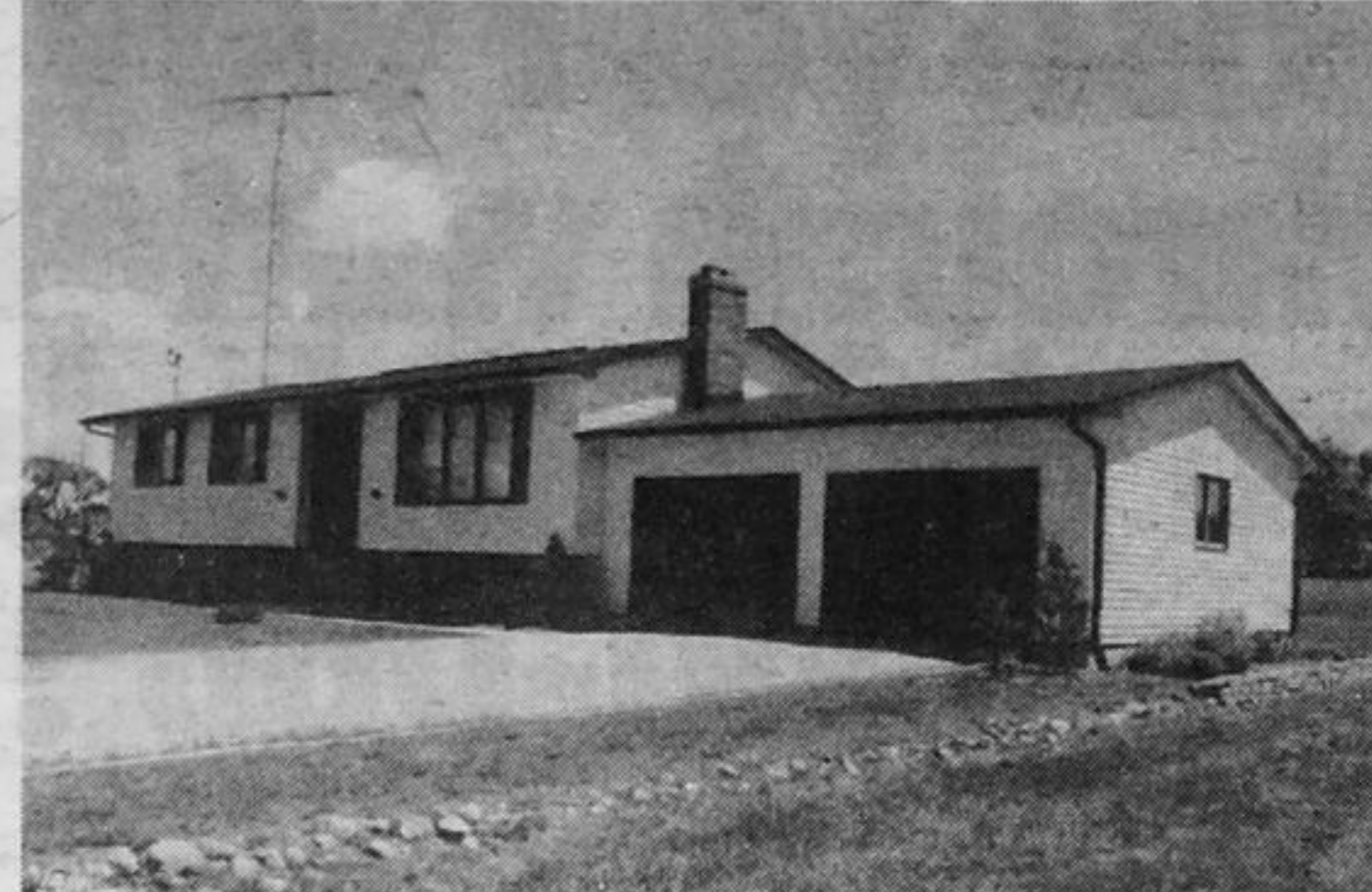
They can be planted from late September until mid or late October - until it's too cold to be out digging holes in the ground. I read in the Cruickshank catalogue when I first started planting bulbs that daffodils do better if planted at a shallower depth than usually recommended - 3" rather than 10-11". They are more certain to bloom if not too deep and are winter hardy. This is the depth I plant at and have never had any problems. Daffodils should be planted in September. Try some of the tiny bulbs this year. The iris reticulata are delightful. They bloom very early in the spring usually while the snow is still on the ground. The plants are short with miniature iris flowers. Iris reticulata, "the violet-scented iris", is a dark purple, the variety Danfordiae is a lovely yellow and there is a wine variety called reticulata J.S. Dijt that is particularly attractive. The small species crocus are likewise very early; earlier than the large crocus we usually see - and, as with all crocus, multiply readily. If you want to browse through my favourite bulb catalogue the address is:
C.A. Cruickshank Ltd.
1015 Mount Pleasant Road
Toronto M4P 2M1
The cost is \$1.00.

M. Keates

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