

Key to the *Narcissus* species in the Maltese Islands

(Stephen Mifsud / July 2025) – V1.3

1. Scape with 1–2(3) flowers; leaves ca. 1 mm wide, absent during anthesis 2
- + Scape with 3 or more flowers; leaves >2 mm wide, present during anthesis 3

2. Perianth tube widens abruptly halfway through its length (bottle-shaped); corona always with 6 isolated segments *N. serotinus* *
- + Perianth tube tubular with almost parallel sides and widens slightly (barely detectable) at the tip below the tepals; corona mostly with 3 segments or continuous as a single unit, subentire, or with 3 clefts or shallow lobes *N. deficiens*

3. Corona distinctly lemon to yolk yellow, similar in colour to the anthers; flower tube light green or yellowish-green 4
- + Corona white, cream or pale yellow, much contrasting with the golden-coloured anthers; flower tube white 9

4. Tepals very narrow, linear-oblong, never imbricated. Corona <4mm wide *N. elegans* +
- + Tepals broadly ovate, overlapping at the lower half. Corona >4 mm wide 5

5. Plants with 1–2 leaves; 2–5 flowers per scape; fruit capsules shrivelled, undeveloped and seedless, anthers with scanty pollen, pollen mostly shrivelled or empty when observed under the microscope, dimorphic *N. ×briffae*
- + Plants with 3–4 leaves; 5 or more flowers per scape; fruit capsules barrel-shaped with viable black seeds; anthers covered with copious pollen, turgid and broadly ellipsoid with a slightly flattened side, all the same shape 6. (*N. tazetta* s.l.)

6. First flowers blossoming in October–November, growing in a rocky habitat (typically valley banks); the maximum number of flowers per scape within a tuft is up to 7–8, seldom forming large tufts, usually in small groups or singular plants subsp. *aequilimbus*
- + First flowers blossoming in January, growing in open clayey ground (typically fields and clay slopes); maximum number of flowers per scape within a tuft or population is up to 10–12, often forming large tufts or carpets of plants 7

7. Tepals and corona deep yellow subsp. *aureus* ^
- + Tepals and corona discolorous, tepals white or cream 8

8. Corona cream to pale yellow, rare horticulture escape subsp. *italicus* ^
- + Corona yolk yellow, common in the wild subsp. *tazetta*

9. Corona white and same colour as the tepals *N. papyraceus* ^
- + Corona cream and dissimilar from the white tepals *N. tazetta* subsp. *italicus* ^

* species recorded from Malta, but occurrences are doubtful and require further verification; unlikely to be present in Malta.

+ past misidentifications.

^ alien species for the Maltese Islands.