



**- MEDIA RELEASE -**

**VALENTINE'S PASSION FOR NATIVE BRITISH FLOWERS AS  
SCILLONIAN COMPANY CELEBRATE  
500,000<sup>TH</sup> ORDER**

On the most romantic week of the year, a family-run mail order flower business on the Isles of Scilly has celebrated their 500,000<sup>th</sup> order - proving the passion for native English grown flowers is still very much alive in an industry dominated by foreign imports and year-round availability.

Scented narcissi growers **Scent from the Islands** have enjoyed steady growth year on year since they switched from selling their exquisitely scented blooms away from a handful of supermarkets and wholesalers directly to customers via the Royal Mail in 1992.

From an initial workforce of just two, the Julian family from St Martins now employ 18 full-time staff and hire up to 30 extra workers during peak seasons to meet the growing demand for their flowers which are so inextricably linked with the landscape, people and economy of the Isles of Scilly.

*"Our customer base has quite literally sky-rocketed over recent years as word of mouth has spread about these fantastic little scented flowers that we grow on the Isles of Scilly"* explains Ben Julian, director of scented narcissi growers Scent from the Islands.

*"There simply wasn't a future for us growing narcissi on St Martins when we sold to the supermarkets; we were actually losing money on each box of flowers we produced. Selling directly to customers was initially a big gamble but reaching half a million orders shows that we made the right decision."*

*“What’s become increasingly evident is that the message of buying British is having a major impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers. In line with the trend of consumers taking an active interest in the provenance of food and drink we’ve noticed a similar desire to buy flowers grown closer to home and not flown half way around the world in planes belching out harmful emissions.”*

The UK fresh flower and indoor plant market is worth £2.2 billion a year at retail level according to the Flowers & Plants Association, the promotional organization for the industry. Yet a large amount of the flowers sold in the UK are in fact grown abroad in countries with warmer climates and cheaper labour – ensuring that floral favourites like roses, still seen at the must have flower for valentine’s day – are available all year round.

Ben Julian continues: *“Our flowers are seasonally produced; we stagger planting so that we can provide scented narcissi from October to April and scented pinks from Mid-May to October. Unlike other flower growers in other parts of the country we grow everything outside without the aid of, greenhouses, artificial light and heaters so our crops are far more environmentally friendly than most of the bouquets of flowers you’re likely to see at the supermarket.*

It is the company’s commitment to the quality of their products and focus on customer care that’s helped them to convert customers into repeat buyers: *“Around 60 per cent of our orders are from customers that have bought from us before. Despite our rapid growth we pride ourselves on our ‘personal touch’ approach and some customers order as many as 60 gift boxes a year.”*

It was precisely the personal touch that led Jim Crooks from Stockbridge, Hampshire to order a box of scented narcissi for his wife for Valentine’s Day, making him Scent from the Islands 500,00<sup>th</sup> customer for which he will be rewarded with regular deliveries of boxes of floral sunshine from St Martins for the next year.

Mr Crooks said: *“We visited St Martins on holiday a few years ago and we now enjoy ordering the scented narcissi because it reminds us of the wonderful time we had on the Scillies. The scented narcissi from Scent from the Islands always reach us in fantastic condition often as quickly as the day after they’re ordered so we can be assured of their freshness.*

*"I enjoy the level of service we get from the company, there's definitely that family-run business feel which is quite rare nowadays. Their flowers are also quite different from those sold in the supermarket and we enjoy sending them as gifts to family and friends as well as treating ourselves."*

Scent from the Islands send on average 1500 boxes of flowers a month by ferry to mainland Cornwall for distribution by the Royal Mail throughout the country. During seasonal peaks like Christmas and Mother's Day this can rise to 10,000 orders in a single despatch.

To order early narcissi grown on the Isles of Scilly from Scent from the Islands call 0845 345 1691 (all calls at local rate) or 01720 422 169 or order online at [www.scillyflowers.co.uk](http://www.scillyflowers.co.uk)

Posy packs start at £8.50 up to £17.50 for a pack of 60 stems, which will provide a stunning display of around 420 individual flower heads.

**Ends**

**XX February 2006**

### **Notes for editors**

#### **Promotions and competitions**

If you are interested in discussing opportunities to work with Scent from the Islands on competitions or promotions, please contact Laura Tregonning (contact details below)

#### **For further details, please contact:**

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