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# THE 1927-28 MESSAGE

FROM

## THE VANDERBILT HYBRID DELPHINIUMS

San Rafael, California



More VH TYPE PLANTS, 2nd Year.  
Double, Ruffled, Bee'd, Pink-blue Pastels.

To the VH Circle:—Greetings once more to the great family of Delphinium Lovers growing and praising our productions. In our Message we voiced appreciation of the flower lover to flower lover note of our strain. But the greater number of new Vanderbilt fanciers have now come from these same folks as members of Garden Associations, and Garden Sections of the Federated Woman's Clubs doing so much for "Better Gardens" in America. More than ever, we emphasize our first and much disputed claim that Delphinium is a typical "Ladies Flower" and its popularity would arise largely through their definite preferences therein.

OUR STRAIN. Repeating orders over a long period of years from nursery, florists and fancier circles, with frequent note that each successive planting from our



stock exceeds former averages, we believe is the clearest and most definite test of our efforts toward better Delphiniums. Now we are adding numbers of intensive plant breeders and Botanical Gardens folk the world over to our circle. Mr. William Bacon, East View Ranch, Sebastopol, Calif., of wide experience abroad in horticultural matters and still an intensive experimenter, thus condenses an opinion expressed in many ways by others: "I sent VH seeds to Orillia, Canada, two years ago and visited there a year later. They created great interest, approaching even a sensational nature. To me, the VH line has a refinement, beauty of form, rich blendings, suffusions and combinations in colorings and bees, and withal a vigor and toughness or substance, floriferousness (three crops here), and tall fine spikes of flowers, which really places them in a class all of their own."

**OUR PREFERENCE.** We originally visioned a type of plant and spike closely allied to the native species base of the Vanderbilts, tall, slender, loose in arrangement, semi and full double, distinctively balanced in artistry of form, habit and clear colorings which we had not been able to obtain from other sources before. We believe we have stocks on these lines which of themselves have been the real means of forcing the Vanderbilts into their present position in Delphinium circles of today. Hundreds of flower lovers visit us each season and at once acclaim these as favorites. More distant folk can also vision them by having California friends call in the April-October blooming season and send them accounts. Thursday afternoons we set aside as special visiting days, or by appointment at other times.

**OUR SPECIALTIES.** We attempt in our seeds supplies list, to group the many differing requests reaching us through the years, so as to enable growers of Vanderbilts, after once trying the general mixture to then proceed to increase the particular favorites located therein. Likewise for the Fancier to try some of the special things we develop to type. Pre-season reservations insure these, but later orders have to be sent in part packets as supplies decrease. We especially emphasize the fact that we do NOT reserve selection seeds, but use 80% of ALL types in mixtures, each year displacing many tested plants by better new things. Thus larger plantings, and re-distributors, at all times have our best selections in each class.

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NO. 5500 TYPE

Large Flowered, Huge Spikes, 3 in Flowers  
(Difficultly Photographed)





A PERFECTED VANDERBILT  
(Soft pink shaded light blue.)



A SKYLINE IN BLUES  
(Over a 4 foot fence.)

# "HYACINTH DELPHS"



An "EMILY TAYLOR" Seedling  
The "All-Out-Together" VH type  
in tinted ivory, with hint of blue.

## ARE VH HARDY? NOTE WHERE THEY GROW:

### AMERICA

Alabama	Montana
Arizona	Missouri (21)
Arkansas	Nebraska
California (120)	Nevada
Colorado	N. Hampshire
Connecticut (36)	New Jersey (47)
Delaware	New York (85)
District Columbia	North Carolina
Florida	Ohio (31)
Georgia	Oklahoma
H. T.	Oregon (28)
Idaho	Pennsylvania
Illinois (61)	(90)
Indiana (24)	P. I.
Iowa (26)	Rhode Island
Kansas	South Carolina
Kentucky	South Dakota
Louisiana	Tennessee
Maine	Texas
Maryland	Utah
Massachusetts	Vermont
(58)	Virginia
Michigan (24)	Washington (30)
Minnesota	W. Virginia
Mississippi	Wisconsin (23)

### CANADA

Alberta	Ontario (26)
British Columbia	P. E. I.
Manitoba	Quebec
N. Brunswick	Sackatchewan
Nova Scotia	

### ABROAD

Australia	Italy
Checkos	Japan
China	Mexico
Egypt	Norway
England	New Zealand
France	Roumania
Germany	South Africa

NOTE—Figures show 20 and over cities and towns, indicative, we believe, of activities of Garden Club Circles territory.

## “BETTER METHODS”



A VH “NO LOSSES” METHOD

**SEED TO SEED SUGGESTIONS.**—The above picture has caused unexpected interest and adoption of seed box germination instead of seed bed practices, even by large growers. We prefer it. One instantly detects troubles such as snails, mildew, damping off, sparrows damage, cut worms, etc., and confines them to small areas. Provides even moisture, or quick drying off of excess by edging of box, likewise constant soil stirring in critical seed leaf stage. Avoids smothering of the finest plants in slower growing kinds in mixtures, and enables sowing of even growing kinds separately. Fifteen hundred plants are easily started in a 16x22x3 inch flat, seldom losing a single one. Seventy-five to one hundred plants per flat later, allows keeping plants growing vigorously until conditions of fielding are perfect; likewise space along walks, field edges, etc., or under temporary cover from storms takes care of them. Flatted plants are fielded easier, with minimum root disturbance and without wind or sun damage in shifting. The critical losses in seed bed planting by damping off and smothering of slow growers is largely avoided this way. Drainage is the vital factor. Gravel, decayed coarse vegetable matter or refuse should fill one-fourth of box. Next fill with equal parts mixture of sand, leafmold (fine peat will do), and grass-roots loam,—less sand and more loam if preferred,—then wet thoroughly. Add layer of soil mixture, firm well, sow thickly in drills, sift merely enough fine soil or sand and peat to cover, press down, and place in cool place away from drafts but well ventilated, in dark or burlap or box covered position. The added moisture avoids watering until plants are up. Thick sowing seems to better the germination. When seedlings appear, bring to light and cooler sunlight position at first. We use Qua Sul spray on soil, after sowing and when appearing,—to avoid damping off. Uspulin and Semesan are also widely recommended for this purpose. We spray seedlings with Qua Sul at intervals until fielding. Flat the plants as soon as second leaves appear. If left thereafter the roots interlock badly. Flattening soil should have more loam than above, and bone meal or woodashes or both at bottom greatly assists later. Insure excellent drainage as before. Shade the plants a day or two.

Once more we urge growers to use spare time through the season in starting Delphiniums. Bury the flat in soil to conserve moisture, let them grow on to dormancy, in winter stack them up one above the other with ventilation between, and keep just above drying point of soil. In cold climates, leave them buried, mulch heavily and let them freeze. In spring remove mulch, start under temporary storms cover and field when ready. Such plants are decidedly stronger than from seedlings direct



and give many stalks instead of one on first bloom. Most perennials have to be started in Fall, but Delphiniums can be allowed to go dormant for months and winter through properly. Such plants, if potted up under glass, start early and give much earlier bloom when fielded. Spring-sown seeds bloom (here) in average of 150 days from sowing and as quickly as 128 days under intensive methods. Fall sown seeds give dormant winter seedlings blooming in March-April. We find Qua Sul sprinkled along rows of plants deter snails from visiting them and effectually destroy cut worms (these appear at night also). Since the VH characteristic is successive growth, cut off bloomed stalks at once as seed forming will check further crops. We find Qua Sul in 1-200 dilution prevents any fungus troubles out here through the season, and Eastern growers write that our suggested Wright formula (lime and nicotine) checks blight and root rot troubles there.

**THE VH HISTORY.**—We ask the tolerance of former Circle folks at this repetition in the "Message," for new members of the family desire it. For several seasons we held school boy camps in the Sierra mountains, where miles of blooms of the native tall Delphinium scopolorum were hidden high up in the ranges from the usual color-loving eye. We visioned a time when some plant breeder would develop colors amongst them and bring them into gardens the country over, for they excel anything yet see in Delphinium for daintiness, artistry of form and spike, and extreme hardiness. Upon growing some of the first Burbank vari colored strain we found them most susceptible to mildew, though of wonderful colorings,—otherwise hardy and vigorous. So we reasoned that the D. scopolorum, growing near where the Giant Sequoias were untouched by the Ice Age devastation, probably led all other species in undisturbed centuries of fixed form and coloring, and that the Burbanks were candidates for the most variable garden type, likewise marked succession of bloom. Next we visioned a new characted plant, a combination of the native form, daintiness and vigor, and the exquisite decorations of changing colors of the Burbankian developments, and made a cross in 1912. We still have one of the two original seedlings recrossed from this progeny (the Dr. R. I. Moore). Then we plotted out five main qualities which all selections must excel in, later increasing this to ten. In 1924 the good ladies of California State Floral Society saw the results at their spring show and acclaimed the unusual daintiness of form and coloring of the new hybrids. In the same year a 200 spike exhibit at a Sir Francis Drake Centenary exhibition won the Michell Medal over older strains. At the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition Gardens, these new Vanderbilts bloomed all season amongst many others quickly succumbing to mildew in the foggy, cold situation there,—and won both the Garden and Cut Flower awards for Delphiniums. Thereby the Vanderbilts "arrived" in flowerdom circles. Now, each year sees more seedlings from crosses and selections grown here than in all previous years of the strain, whilst for example, the past season has given several distinctly new breaks not before evident, and each one promising a new series on further tests. While we believe this to be the only distinctly pure bred strain existent, since started and developed for purely botanical variation studies and therefor kept clear from perhaps equally good sensational types from other strains, it is the assistance rendered to other breeders with our types that has brought the greatest satisfaction here. Nine widely featured strains have had their foundation wholly or in part from Vanderilts and we each year offer their developers new things as they appear here. For some years we merely grew seed for the former Richard Diener Company distribution until forced to assume direct charge of the work. The constant "up grade" tendency of the strain is no surprise to us in the work here, but has attracted wide attention from professionals in Delphinium results. Likewise the remarkable percentage of semi and full doubles (even to many botanically perfect doubles) from selected parents we believe is unusual. Nevertheless we retain and constantly improve a few selected singles of rare beauty, and do not find that they interfere in the work, in fact we much prefer a semi double, perfected "bee" flower to a full double, for it allows greater chance to develop the charming two and hinted-three color blossoms of Vanderbilt development. For a long time we did not mention the unusual size of some flowers here, considering them exceptional, but on completing a "new structure" plant in several stages, we found the large flowers attached themselves vigorously to this type, their progeny likewise. Hence we began illustrating them in "Better Delphinium" magazine, as exact size reproductions of three



and up to three and three-fourth inch flowers. Now this type, No. 5500, gives us hundreds of them and we believe will soon spread to many other fine things here. . . . In 1915 Dr. Babcock of the Univ. Calif. Bot. Department at Berkeley, sent us some crossed seeds of *D. cardinalis*, he having no time to develop the series. For some years they gave fixed non fertile purples and finally recrosses broke them into deeper tones. New experiments on the same line have clearly established a definite new series, we believe gradually working up to a promised red, though to Dr. Babcock belongs all credit for the original developments. Our main interest was in hope of through this infusion developing stronger and more permanent deeper rich colors and shadings than before known in *Delphiniums*. Nothing like them in vigor, rare beauty in deep colorings, or fine spikes exists here than in the No. 900, 5300, and 1600 (singles) of this series, and growers everywhere acclaim their charms.

**NEW PROMISES.**—The term "Different *Delphiniums*" most aptly applies to a section of developing new things always at the Gardens here. That of fragrance, which we first announced, and since found occasionally elsewhere also, still remains in the experimental class since only progeny seedlings retaining it are available for further "fixing." Yet we believe it is a definite quality and urge anyone growing Vanderbilts and finding it, to send us on a few seeds to add to the fragrance development experiments here,—but must be from Vanderbilts only. We hope to have distribution seeds of *Delphinium odorata* next Fall, but have sent them to many quarters for trial already. Our picotee pink-blue prizes (No. 8200) do not yet sufficiently reproduce to insure continuance but are rare prizes indeed when appearing. Likewise the isolation and fixing of clear pink (No. 400), while affording most exquisite occasionals, is proving a difficult matter indeed. In aster petalage a large flower form finally appears (No. 9400) as perfect as any marguerite and in vigorous growth, fortunately. The prize No. 8300 in deepest doubled blue in pure self, sun resisting flowers is seemingly fixed and headed by our long planned Mrs. Francis King as a base selection. In the No. 1500 series, the clear cerulean doubled blue with fine light bees, we have selected Lord Kitchener raised from our seeds by Major Wm. de Bertodano, as a selective base and believe nothing yet in *Delphiniums* approaches perfect types of this fine thing. Our Burbank Memories (No. 8100) in semi double pink-blue combinations has Samarkand as its parent base type, and having developed successively from No. 100, 300, 3900 and 7300, has heritage and rare beauty characters quite meeting our standards here. Such gorgeous effects in deep blues and crimson purples as shown in No. 1700, 2500, and 5300 are all *D. cardinalis* developments and receive unending comment. The No. 600 types in pure lilac, lavender, mauve, mouse and near pink to deepest self purple we clearly establish, and segregated the leading progeny repeaters therefrom. The large flowered section No. 5500 is the center of all interest nowadays, and furtive measurements are taken by many visitors without comment. Likewise an old series finally shows promising breaks in thick petalage (No. 3800) and we believe with our No. 3900 are the most lasting of all flowers yet tested. Thus the interesting work goes on. Come and see the results in the fields, or write your friends to do so and tell you about them.

**OUR AIM** is constantly toward extreme hardiness first, plant habit second, and balanced perfection third. With these qualities the rarest colorings seem to deck the new plants without fail. We have note of many growers of VH getting yellows and whites from the seeds but have none here. Doubtless some ordinary parent type here gives them, whilst we plant only selections. Seeds of these will be tested thoroughly if sent, and preferred selections exchanged for them. We call attention of amateurs to three main items: Care for your seeds before planting. At low temperature free from drafts they do NOT deteriorate more than ordinary seeds except through humidity changes. If very dry, swell between wet blotting pads or cotton flannel before planting. If lack of room, discard the quicker growing seedlings and coax along the slow ones for average of finer things. Finally, water your seedlings constantly and keep the ground stirred constantly. Cut the blooms freely, for heavy rootage is desired for greater second year show. While we cannot insure results in planting under different conditions, we will replace packets, except in large quantities, upon prompt report and detail re failures. Earnest planters profit thereby and we are seldom imposed upon by this guarantee.

# SUPPLIES LIST

## THE VANDERBILT HYBRID DELPHINIUMS

1928-9

A detailed check list of specialities is enclosed for fanciers already using our mixtures. Seeds are available from about July 1st but in large variety a few weeks later. This "Message" reaches the Vanderbilt Circle first and we urge pre-season reservations, **enclosing no money**, but stating specialities or stocks desired, and approximate date of planting planned. Otherwise many old patrons lose first chance for the best things, which are soon exhausted by an ever-increasing circle of patrons. In due time we will card all pre-season reservations and formal orders can follow. We collect seeds from separate parents, and discard poor keepers.

We cannot yet guarantee colors to parent, though many tested percentages are surprisingly good. But by our "types" plan, each century number indicating 10-100 closely similar distinctive types and colorings, a packet insures large percentage of colors desired, with insurance of the plant type habits generally of that series. Keep seeds wrapped as sent until planting. Our prices have not changed, but since Speciality seeds are hand cleaned, and packeted as ordered, the prices, therefore are higher. The quantity is limited, as we place 80% of all best sorts in general mixture to protect larger growers supplies standard. ALL SEED SENT are of current season collecting only.

### SEEDS

- (1) **Vanderbilt Hybrids**, 8000 tested selections (not merely a field seeds collection) from about 160,000 grown here in a pure bred strain. For nursery, cut bloom and large plantings this gives universal satisfaction and several largest seed firms distribute it. Light or dark shades increased at request. Ounce, \$3.50; trade packet, 500 seeds, 50c. Special shades to order.
- (2) **Vanderbilt Specialist Packet**, at least 400 seeds, \$1.00. From 1000 personal preferences of the collection, leaders in all type series.
- (3) **Vanderbilt Special Mixtures** to parent colorings in light, medium, deep, pink-blue, or in mixed doubles or singles only, at least 400 seeds, \$2.00. (Selected doubles only, \$3.00.)
- (4) **Vanderbilt Fanciers' Types**, at least 100 seeds, per single packet, 50c.
- (5) **Vanderbilt Fanciers' Groups** by packet at least 100 seeds, five selections, \$1.50; ten selections, \$2.75; fifteen, \$4.00.
- (6) **Vanderbilt Exhibitions Group**, 100 plants, chosen from named and form best spikes, vigor, resistance, beauty and succession, at least 400 seeds, \$3.50; 1000 seeds, \$7.00.
- (7) **Vanderbilt Named Sorts**. A Vanderbilt named plant means a perfected ten quality plant. We allow very few to be named. 34 plants, mixed, at least 200 seeds, \$1.50. In selected main color, 100 seeds, 75c. Limited supply.
- (8) **Vanderbilt Amateurs' Packet**. Our personal selection to main color desired, at least 200 seeds, 50c. Prices include United States and Canada delivery, also foreign totaling quarter ounce lots. Ten cents extra for Air Mail saves several days carriage. We advise 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice be sent us.

### PLANTS

Limited selections for Fall delivery. In quantity for large plantings, mixed. Canada orders must have permits. Pre-season reservations, **without money sent**, should be made re quantity, mixed or to color, labeled or unlabeled, unbloomed plants or 1, 2 or 3 year clumps. Prices on application, includes delivery.

PLEASE send us card or report as to previous germination, flowering, and Show results with Vanderbilts. Thus we know growers preferences, and can discuss troubles.

JOHN W. SCHLOSSER  
NEWELL F. VANDERBILT

ADDRESS—VANDERBILT HYBRIDS, 725 Fifth Ave., San Rafael, California. Gardens at Belle and Union. Visitors Thursday afternoons or by appointment. Closed on Sundays.