



# florida daffodil society news

ISSUE NO. 35????

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## WHETHER THE WEATHER?

The big news is ... is a warm, warm, winter! We can empathize with Atlantian Elizabeth Dean who wants to yell at her daffodils "What are you doing? You should be asleep!"\* Why are some daffodils blooming? Lots of sun and warm temps!! Take N. Italicus – normally bloom time is January, but 2 robust plantings in full sun peaked bloom December 14. Never have the large or small paper whites (full sun) looked so healthy, peaking 2-3 weeks early. Daffodils and paper whites planted in semi-shade, or overcrowded, have hardly bloomed.

In one week N. Jonquilla's reed-like foliage doubled in length. The "regular" jonquilla is almost as tall as the "early" clone, and yet there is a month's difference in blooming time. One lonely Cragford bloomed the first week in December. Golden Dawn is growing at a tremendous rate in full sun. Wonder if the bulbs sold this year are up?

**Please Note:** Should temperatures dip below the mid-twenties, open flowers will freeze. Frost protection is especially necessary when growing bulbs in full sun.

\* (Courtesy Tallahassee Democrat)

## NEWBIES

One cultivar that is encouraging is Bethlehem. This short tazetta was developed in Israel. John bought 100 in 1999 and, due to lack of space, planted them in the vegetable garden. Great flowers – good size florets – the large cup is a strong yellow before it fades. Then: disaster. Rich soil and excess water produced basil rot. Roughly 25 survived. They are now happily growing in sandy soil outside the sprinkler's range and every bulb has a bloom stalk. Peak was the week of December 18, and with a good fragrance to boot.

The best Israeli tazetta is still Omri, a great multiplier purchased in 1995, which peaked December 16, and had 100% bloom of cream petals and light yellow cups. It has a fresh, sweet smelling presence. The least successful is Nony. The cup is very small and the plant would look best in a pot.

For those of you who want to "force" daffodils, Ziva is the best, but it is not good for naturalizing in our area.

Bill Welch sent some gigantic blubs of Australian paper white. These have bloomed, with no scent to speak of, large flat leaves that give them a balances look and seven flowering stalks.

Watering is not a difference! Bulbs in half a bed that received the full effects of the sprinkler are almost twice as tall as those "shorted".

## McCORD PARK

Phase one of the John C. Van Beck Garden is planted! Clara Jane Smith laid out a grove of ash magnolias donated by Native Nurseries, wild azaleas donated by Richbourg Nursery, Inc., and large crabapple trees plus Chickasaw plum trees donated by Tallahassee Nurseries.

Through the Tallahassee Friends of Our Parks Foundation, a park bench, plaque and stone base have been purchased. Emmet and Linda Owens are building a small wooden bridge which will serve as a highway for bicyclists hurtling down the slope and span a seasonal runoff stream from Thomasville Road. White Bulb Farm donated 1,000 of the 5,000-bulb Carlton daffodil drift.

Clara Jane specified phlox subulata (pink thrift) to brighten the grass path. Cuttings from John's garden are growing under the watchful eye of Weej Broderson. The Tallahassee Parks crew prepared the beds, planted the trees and bulbs and put in the walk. Blooming time may be the end of February. If the Parks Department decides not to have a dedication, we will let people know the best time to come for bloom peak. Last but not least, Weej Broderson helped with the wording of the plaque.

A Garden in Memory of

John C. Van Beck

In sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm he spread a "host of golden daffodils" throughout the South.

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## DANCING DAFFODILS

One late afternoon, at dusk, I was standing near the N. Italicus. The flowers were moving! Brom! Buzz! Bam! Two reddish brown sphinx type moths were hitting the florets and nearly each other but they never landed. Some skippers, sulphurs, small wasps and a painted lady butterfly have been pollinating during the day.

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## STEPHENSON PAPER WHITE PROJECT

The Project is sponsored by the Stephenson family, whose name is synonymous with paper whites, as they owned and operated the largest growing/distribution center of paper whites in America. It was located near Jacksonville.

The goal is to return paper whites to the Historic District of Tallahassee and other historic sites in town. Bulbs have been dispersed to the Riley House Museum, Lewis House, Perkins House, and LeMoyne Art Foundation. Under the auspices of the Tallahassee Trust for Preservation, 125 bulbs were donated to members, including a number of bulbs to the Bloxam House. These bulbs were donated to the Project by Montine Martin of Blakely, Georgia. The Society will continue to work with the Trust to keep a roster of participants, identify interested parties and check on location/cultivation of bulbs in the summer in areas with no sprinkling system.

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## TID BITS

Daffodil seeds from John's garden have found a home with Estelle Richardson in Marianna, Florida.

The "lost" volunteers at the Daffodil Show are Lori Johnson and her mother, Mary Henry. Elliot Dunn brought flowers.

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## BRAGGING RIGHTS

At the Southeast Regional Daffodil Show in Atlanta, Sara Van Beck won the Historic Award with her entry, White Lady. She worked at the show, which is held in mid-March. Not a good time for daffodils grown in Zone 8b, although John did refrigerate and enter blooms one year. Thirty-two exhibitors entered 314 exhibits with 475 blooms. There were 16 flower arrangements.

Sara also contributed an article on the use of formalin in hot water treatment baths of daffodil bulbs, to the September issue of the *American Daffodil Society Journal*.

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## COMINGS AND GOINGS

Linda Van Beck conducted a bulb sale in Madison and will talk to the Madison Garden Club this spring. She gave slide show/lectures for the Friends of Eden State Park at the Park in Point Washington and the horticulture students at Lively Technical Center. One student said he wanted to cry. He had gone to Lowes, bought inappropriate bulbs, thought he followed the instructions **but ...** planted in very rich soil, in rows, and upside down! He's going to lift the bulbs, replant, and see what he gets.

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## GOODWOOD

Good news from Goodwood! The library is organized and moved, a major step toward establishing a resource center. Among the books, journals and photos of daffodils waiting room is a large loose leaf notebook compiled and written by Linda Williams in support of her nomination of John Van Beck for the American Horticultural Society's Liberty Hyde Bailey Award. The nomination was not successful, but the notebook is a wonderful tribute to John.

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## 2001 BULB SALE

Response to the preorder form was good. More than 30 members participated. Plans are to do it again, but there will be a process for out-of-town order (shipping and pickup) and the FDS responsibility for bulbs not picked up. In all, 15,790 bulbs were sold or put in public plantings!

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**This is where your dues go, so please renew,  
as many members are overdue and will not  
receive another reminder or newsletter.**

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