



florida daffodil society news

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APRIL 2005

WHATTA SPRING!

WOW! What a spring for daffodils across the south. The heavy hurricane rains sent food and water down to the tazetta roots, producing healthy robust plants across Florida. January's cold sunny days plus drought conditions was exactly what all the orange/red and marginal daffodils needed. In the Van Beck garden, daffodils are still popping blooms where none have been seen for many years. A lack of early March heat waves also helped blooms hold on, ranging from the miniature Jumble 7yy to soft yellow trumpets and huge yellow cups/white petals dafs rescued from Edwin White's property in 1977. In 1998, John Van Beck commented (FDS Newsletter #21) "best ever for daffodils: no heavy freezes and lots of chilly weather." The same can be said for 2005.

You may have noticed 4 florets for Cragford, more double blooms (especially Waterperry), fat flowers (Tresamble is huge) and strong color (rims on Itzim were nearly red). The reason, again, is the weather. The Van Beck garden's soils do not warm up as fast as those in urban areas and some late bloomers were very late. This year, daffodils such as Trevithian that ordinarily start in late February, peaked in the middle of March. It is one thing to have delayed blooming from newly planted bulbs, but one does not expect Tête à Tête to start blooming on March 20.

GARDEN OBSERVATIONS

The carpenter bee is known as an excellent pollinator of open-faced fruit blooms. This year a pair of bees became active in early February and substituted tazettas for the not-yet-open blueberry blooms. The bees suck nectar, but because they have mouthparts capable of boring wood, they easily bore into the pedicle of tazettas. This is a comical activity, as many florets are not strong enough to support the large bee as it attempts to grasp the narrow neck of the flower. When the petals are pushed aside there is a possibility that pollination occurs. Some tazettas produce withered pods, but

this year 2 pods had a huge black shiny seed. A very thin scar line was noticed on some of the tazettas where the bees entered the flower.

Two blossoms of strongly scented Shepard's Hey 7yy were cut off just above the ovary, but once the blueberries came into flower the daffodils were left alone.

THE BOOK

The book Daffodils in Florida is opening doors for the FDS to carry out its educational program to communities in Florida and the Coastal South. Linda and Sara Van Beck were invited to participate in the Jonquil Jubilee in Gibsland, Louisiana. Sara manned the FDS booth, giving out literature, answering questions, selling books and showing historic Florida daffodils. She also drove us to and from Atlanta. Linda gave 2 slide shows. Thanks to big coverage in the Shreveport newspaper, over 50 people came up from Southern Louisiana to find out how to successfully grow daffodils. In September, at the Fall Louisiana Master Gardeners' Conference in Baton Rouge, Linda will lecture and hold a seminar on historic daffodils.

The book is now available at Tallahassee Nurseries and Native Nurseries, Goodwood, LeMoyné and the Explorer's Club. A phone call (850-878-9753) will get you an autographed copy!

DUES ARE OVERDUE!

If your newsletter address label or e-mail has "04" on it, we haven't received your dues and you will not receive another newsletter. Hope you will rejoin and send \$10 to Mary Maude Sharpe, 7020 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee 32311.

FDS EDUCATION

In Florida communities, the FDS's general plan for education programs is to make presentations to IFIS Master Gardeners and Garden Clubs, followed by a members' bulb sale and public plantings. This year, the plan is being extended to include participation in public events for gardeners and working with at least one local nursery so that appropriate bulbs are available.

In April, Linda will set up FDS tables at the April Spring Festival in Milton and the Spring Thing in Panama City. She recently was a featured speaker at the 15th Spring Garden Festival at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens in G'ville. Mary Ann from Goerings Bookstore and FDS member Larry Schwandes helped give out literature and 150 free Trevithian stems. People stopped and stared at the labeled daffodils set out with a sign "Grows in G'ville." With our flyer, people will be able to go to nurseries and retail stores with confidence. Harmony Nursery was interested in supplying appropriate bulbs and asked for a FDS slide show. The game plan is to stick with early bloomers and build up confidence in growing daffodils. People who see dafs blooming want to grow them!

Reaching the general public is very important for the FDS now that we have finally caught the attention of the North American Flowerbulb Wholesalers Association (NAFWA), who recently held their annual convention in Disney World. On behalf of the FDS, President Linda Van Beck welcomed the group to Florida and had a brief visit with Dutch and English bulb wholesalers. Hopefully, the FDS will play a larger role at the next convention.

2005 FLOWER SHOW

A big round of applause for our new chairman, Lori Johnson, who remained "cool" and expertly took charge of our 2-day event. NO RAIN! Volunteer greeters included Bob and Jean Denk, Mary Henry, Marge Orrick, Sandra Whitehead, Weej Broderson, Mary Ann Tonnacliff and Jo Folsome. Lennie Kennedy was a "good right arm" overall helper; and Mary Maude Sharpe and Yoko Hodges did outstanding floral designs.

If you came to the show, you saw a steady flow of people following our bright new vinyl signs and banners, designed by Stephen Little. For the first time, there is no doubt who was putting on the show and where it was located. Our new membership sign was designed by Bob Burke. Did we look professional!! AND we offer a hearty welcome to the thirty people who signed up for FDS membership.

BITS AND PIECES

Red Hills Horse Trials

FDS liaison member Charlotte Holland reported that our dafs were up front at the competitor-owner registration table. FDS provided daffodils to welcome out of state guests to Florida, and to show that it was springtime in Tallahassee.

Brunswick, Georgia

Jerry Springer, landscape architect, has stayed in touch with FDS since he kindly corrected John Van Beck's statement that "no trumpet dafs will grow for us." Jerry had found Flower Carpet 1yy growing in Beaufort, S.C. This is the *only* trumpet (so far!) which will bloom in our area. Jerry recently shared photos and information on Grand Primo 8wy blooming in a large garden in St. Simon's Island. He sent a cup measurement which matched the Georgia population botanical description in Daffodils in Florida. His comment on "less fragrance" also matched the Georgia Grand Primos in the Van Beck garden. Even more exciting was his description of a tazetta found on Sea Island. A perfect match, including blooming time and foliage, to Nat Williams 8wy. The FDS is tracking Nat Williams to provide documentation that it is the "Pearl" referenced to in Florida literature.

Breezland, Holland

Jan Pennings, Dutch bulb grower, reported in his Christmas card, complete with 4 photos, how he was sterilizing his bulb beds in a completely organic way. In summer, the beds are flattened and diked, then flooded with pumped water for 8 weeks.

NY TIMES ADVICE FOR FORCING BULBS

A question titled "Gin On The Rocks, For Bulbs" asked how adding gin to the water reduced the length of the Paper White stems but did not affect the flowers. The answer suggested that alcohol would interfere with water intake but, as flowers are fully formed inside the bulb, they may not use water in the same way as stems.

Suggestion 2: For shorter stems, "stroke plants lightly with the palm of your hand for 10 to 15 seconds once or twice or day and they will respond by growing less tall."
