



ISSUE NO.
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florida daffodil society news

DECEMBER 2005

DUES UPDATE FROM MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN Mary Maude Sharpe

According to the by-laws of the Florida Daffodil Society annual dues are payable on June 1 and membership will be terminated on August 31 if dues payment is not received by that date.

Please refer to the address label on your newsletter. The date printed above your name shows the date that your dues are paid through. If the date is May 2006 or a later year you are a current paid member. You do not need to do anything. However, if the address label date is prior to May 2006, you will be dropped from the mailing and membership list as of December 31, 2005 unless dues are received by that date. This is a special extension granted as a one time opportunity.

Please remit your dues directly to the treasurer, Mary Ann Tonnacliff, 7757 Preservation Road, Tallahassee FL 32312-6737. A membership form is enclosed for your convenience. We hope that your interest in daffodils continues, as will your membership for the 2005-2006 year.

E-mail members: please note that you will receive your dues update information by an additional e-mail from the membership chairman, Mary Maude Sharpe, 850-878-9625, e-mail WJMSHARPE@AOL.COM.

GARDEN NOTES

WEEDING:

In established bulb beds, weeding can be a problem, as you will see by the following short tale. The ground had been watered, the soil was loose and the gentleman weeder energetic. All looked well. He had even "dusted" the pulled weeds. Days later, after a rain, all was not well. The small and medium size bulbs scattered the surface like white stones. It is very easy to pull up the smaller bulbs, and even large bulbs when they are overcrowded and near the surface. With vigorous weeding, bulbs will seem to fly about like missiles. If the bulbs get too hot while on the surface, they will not bloom the following spring even if replanted properly.

Also – do keep yourself and others from walking on top of the beds. It is amazing how easily the soil packs down and makes weeding harder.

CHOPPING:

When planting or moving bulbs in the fall, one often cuts into a bulb with roots. In Thomasville, when digging N. Nat Williams in Don East's curbside beds, a batch of bulbs were sliced. The tazettas had multiplied into clumps of 8-9 bulbs – looked like upright "hands" of small bananas. All bulbs were kept in water for the short, cold trip to the Thomas County Historical Society, where they were planted in the Nat Williams Memorial Garden. Later, a cut bulb (sliced off at upper quarter) was washed, trimmed and set upright with the roots in a wet paper towel. The next day, the surface had hardened and the bulb was planted. Jason Delaney repeated what others have said ... "only the basal plate seems to be of importance." So, even if the bulb had been planted with its wet gushy wound and rot set in, the basal

plate probably would survive and make a new bulblet on the plate. By drying off the bulb, it may still bloom this year if the flower bud sheath was not cut.

EXTREMES

The prolonged drought this fall will retard bulb growth and blooming times in early blooming tazettas. Autumn Yellows didn't appear until mid- to late-November – 3 weeks late – and the large Paper Whites may miss Christmas. February bloomers may not be adversely affected. Do start watering as soon as the tips appear.

Some members of the Amaryllidaceae Family, including daffodils, can't take extremes in temperature, erratic moisture, or too much moisture, or even improper soil depth. The bulbs "break down" and "go to grass". The many tiny bulbs that result do not have the strength to flower or grow bigger. Examples are Ziva and Canaliculus. Bulbs not suited to their "new homes" tend to break down into small bulbs and eventually stop blooming.

INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

IFAS is The University of Florida program (UF/IFAS) which is a federal-state-county partnership throughout Florida. There is an IFAS Cooperative Extension Office in all 67 Florida counties, and 13 research/education centers "serving industries critical to their locations." The Master Gardener program, started by IFAS in 1979, holds an Annual Master Gardener Continued Training Conference. This year's conference was held in Gainesville in October and the Florida Daffodil Society was represented for the first time. Our information table and Linda Van Beck's lecture were well received. A number of future speaking engagements were set.

Tom Wichman, Florida Master Gardener Coordinator, agreed to the FDS increasing its activities in central and south central Florida to determine, with the assistance of Master Gardeners, horticultural agents and extension office locations, how far south daffodils will bloom. Ruth Micieli, horticultural agent in Flagler County, will serve as our IFAS consultant. FDS Vice President Emily Millett was instrumental in getting all the paperwork (planting guide, growth record, e-mail addresses and instructions, etc.) presented in a quick and professional manner.

DAFFODIL PROJECT # 1

Project Scope: To determine the limitation of growing daffodils in ten central Florida counties located primarily in Heat Zone 10.

Time Frame: November 2005-2009

Participating Counties: Citrus, Seminole, Sumter, Pasco, Hernando, Orange, Marion, Brevard, Lake, Volusia.

Three counties' Cooperative Extension Office sites were not adequate for daffodil growth, so they will use alternative sites within the county. Volusia County will be represented by FDS member Christine Young, who gardens in Lake Helen. Hernando County's site will be at the Nature Coast Botanical Gardens in Spring Hill. Orange County will start with a planting in Winter Garden under the care of MG Jerry Carris, and move to the new Cooperative Extension Office location next year.

Erlicheer, Carlton, February Gold, Ice Follies, Nat Williams, Nony, Soleil d'Or, St. Keverne, Sweetness and Ziva will be tested this first year. Next year, a large number of daffodil varieties will be added to Project #1. In 2006, FDS/IFAS Project #2 will include IFAS sites in Polk and Osceola counties.

OTHER GOINGS ON

FDS member Graydon Swedberg has started a test garden in Lakeland and the Hillsborough County IFAS requested and received Nony and Nat Williams. FDS member Kay Mercer, Sarasota, asked and received Nony and Nat Williams for the Florida House.

The FDS responded to a request by the Duval IFAS horticultural agent Terry DelValle and sent as many varieties as were available for demonstration gardens in Jacksonville and Mandarin. Recently, Terry wrote a daffodil article for the *Times Union*, complete with photographs. A small contingent of bulbs was sent to the IFAS center in St. Augustine to start a demonstration garden in St. John's County.

Results of the FDS bulb sales are not all available at this time, so a full report will be given in the next newsletter.

The year 2005 has been a busy one. The last lecture/slide show will be presented in December to the Master Gardeners in Crestview (Okaloosa County).

OPEN GARDEN

An invitation is extended to all FDS members to tour the Van Beck garden in 2006. Call ahead for information on what's blooming and how to get there: 850-878-9753.

The only trouble with gardening is that it's too close to the dirt (at least, that's what all the knees say).
