



florida daffodil society news

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2008 FLOWER SHOW

The Annual FDS Flower Show will be held March 1 and 2 in the greenhouse at Tallahassee Nurseries, from 10:00 to 5:00 on Saturday and 10:00 to 4:30 on Sunday. Chair Lori Johnson (321-4885) needs table greeters and general help. She plans a garden show with a section open to members young and older who would like to share their blooms. The FDS has put out a call for arrangements. If you would like to try your hand, call Lori – FDS can supply blooms. There will be no competitions. During show dates, the Van Beck garden will be open to the public – 6061 Weeping Willow Way, Tallahassee (850-878-9753). Call for a guided tour.

BULB STORAGE

Once bulbs are bagged, they have to be stored inside where it is cool and air circulates. To quote Keith Kreidler of Texas, "Bulbs continue to breathe and lose moisture all during their storage time." Drying out or rotting are well known problems. We tend to forget the need for air circulation. Bulbs dry from the outside and normally shed some of the dried tunic. By January, small bulbs can completely desiccate and larger bulbs will be smaller and usually slightly soft to the touch. To determine whether the bulb is alive or dead, follow this recipe based on Keith's commercial bulb handling:

1. Feel bulbs. If "core" is hard, proceed to step 2.
2. Smell bulbs. If smell is moldy, discard.
3. Rub off loose tunic, including exterior mold spores if any persist.
4. Soak in warm tepid liquid fertilizer. Weigh down floating bulbs. Soak for several hours or overnight.
5. If bulbs are really dried out, add a drop of liquid detergent to step 4.
6. Plant as usual. The soaking will help the bulb rehydrate faster in the soil. Sprouting is always a good sign. You do not want to plant rotten bulbs. If still

uncertain, plant suspect bulbs in a segregated area.

The FDS encourages everyone to plant bulbs as soon as you get them, and not keep the bulbs for Christmas presents. Hume said that in northern Florida and southern Alabama, Paper Whites planted in September and October will be well rooted and bloom in December and January. The same may be said for central Florida, as well.

John Van Beck was adamant that dug bulbs should be given a quick bath and air dried with circulation, either by nature, the air conditioner, fan, or a floor fan, as long as air flowed and the bulbs were spaced apart. The air conditioner lightly warmed bulbs, which was good. If they *had* to be store, bulbs were placed in mesh bags and hung up to let them breathe. John's rule? Bulbs belong in the ground, not in the garage!

2007 REVIEW

FDS gave bulb sales and talks to closed and open-to-the-public audiences, courtesy of master gardener and garden club groups, in the following locations in Florida: Navarre, Valpariso, Crestview, Marianna, McClenney, St. Augustine, Ocala, Gainesville, and Tallahassee. In Georgia, the site was – Thomasville!

A number of these sales were held in November. Next year, the FDS plans to hold sales mid-September through October and end the season with the Tallahassee Bulb Sale on November 1. Bulbs are arriving sooner that they were two years ago. We plan to ship bulbs directly from our suppliers to groups for resale in September. At the same time, we should ship to our out-of-town members and get local members to help bag these bulbs. We are now booking for 2008.

Each year the FDS initiates new plantings and adds to the old. We continued to support the Dothan, Alabama Botanical Gardens and the DeFuniak Springs Garden Club. Under Dara Dobson's leadership, DeFuniak Springs Garden Club members have planted 5,180 Carlton daffodils

to date. The bulbs are planted each year during the week of Veterans Day. They dedicate the "living yellow ribbons" to their service men and women. DeFuniak Springs' perfect oval lake is circled by a road, daffodil beds, old homes and the Chautauqua building. The project is well on its way to being a Florida Daffodil Destination. For their efforts, the club won the 2007 Madira Bickel Civic Achievement Award given by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs for adding permanent beautification to a civic area. As Dara says, "we will show how well daffodils adapt to North Florida ... and create a masterpiece for people to enjoy for generations to come." FDS has donated over 3,000 bulbs to this project. The board has agreed to match the number of bulbs purchased by the garden club for 2008.

Carolyn Wicksell, Graceland, Florida, wanted to see if daffodils would fit into a downtown garden club beautification project. A demo bed has been established so folks can see a variety of daffodils. Other new plantings include Trinity Catholic School, Cornerstone Learning Community, both of Tallahassee, and gardens at Alachua, Escambia, Jackson, Okaloosa IFAS extension offices as well as Washington Holms Technical School in Chipley.

ROOTS

True bulbs have coarse primitive roots which, according to Keith Kreidler, means that nutrients are absorbed only at the roots' tips. When FDS says plant 8" apart, the rule is not for leaves but for roots. In loose sandy soil, roots fan out and take up all the space they can. In heavy clay soils roots flair out but basically go straight down.

When you visualize the daffodil's roots, you realize why pot confinement is a problem and why daffodils can't compete for food with invasive tree roots. The FDS always warns against walking on bulb beds. One component of loose soil is lots of air which contains oxygen. Oxygen helps to "improve the size and strength of a root system and its ability to absorb water and nutrients. Oxygen enriched water aids in getting ground water to above ground leaves and hence improving photosynthesis. It's oxygen, not nitrogen, that makes grass green after a rain." (So says an advertisement for oxygen enriched water.) This concept should apply to bulbs. When you plant, resist tamping the soil.

To amend clay soils, dig in 2-3 inches of sand (preferably sharp), perlite, anything that will

loosen the soil but will not add bacteria. Raise the bed and thus assist drainage. When in doubt, think onions! Kreidler has posted a lot of stuff about onions and daffodils being true bulbs and very much alike. There is a lot of research on onions – especially in Texas – and guess what? Onions prefer loose soil.

COMMENTS

While many of us have been complaining about the drought, the daffodils loved the lack of rain and are now enjoying the nasty wet days of January that are common to north Florida. The early short trumpet named Rijnvelds Early Sensation is blooming in the Van Beck garden and in town in editor Phyllis Graham's garden. There is nothing like a big yellow daf to get the spring fever started! RES didn't bloom last year. Imbal, the new Dutch Paper White, still hasn't repeat bloomed. We had hopes there was a new Paper White for us. We'll see what happens next year!

By mid-January, Grand Primo, AKA Old Fashioned, was blooming mightily in John Van Beck's Memorial Garden in McCord Park in Tallahassee. Dr. John and Linda Williams donated more bulbs last year, which helped extend the blooming season. The local newspaper promised, but didn't deliver, a photograph.

After reading the preface of Alan Armitage's book, Herbaceous Perennial Plants, the push for early planting is on. He states that night temperatures above 70° can cause "inhibition of chlorophyll synthesis and lack of secondary cell wall formation," i.e., stunted yellow leaves. In town, asphalt, buildings and roof tops release heat at night, making the air 6-8 degrees hotter than the countryside. You don't plant daffodils in parking lots!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FDS Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 3, 2008

9:15 AM

Old Kitchen

Goodwood Plantation and Gardens
Tallahassee, Florida

Happy Valentine's Day