



ADS YOUTH NEWS

American Daffodil Society Youth Newsletter

Spring, 2010

Volume 6, Issue 1

Wishing For Spring

As the snow rages outside in what will be a record snowfall for our area, there is still hope of spring's arrival. One of the first signs of spring is the leaf tips of the *Narcissus* poking through the ground. That daffodil bulb breaks its dormancy after many weeks in the cool and moist soil. The leaves grow slowly in the cool soil but even this freezing weather outside right now won't stop their growth.

The science of the daffodil bulb is very interesting. The bulb in the cold ground triggers a conversion of its starches into sugars which flow throughout the plant acting like an antifreeze. It thus has the ability to withstand very cold temperatures. The other great thing about the daffodil is that it's deer-resistible. The deer might come up and taste the blooming flowers but one taste and you usually see the flower bit spit out on the ground. That's because it has a toxic chemical called an alkaloid, which is poisonous. And it tastes

really bad. So don't use the daffodil to garnish your salads and cupcakes!

Youth in the News

Bradley Weaver, who will be leaving the ranks of ADS youth as he enters college this year, will continue to grow and show daffodils. It was in some small part that the daffodil helped him win the top award from the National Future Farmers of America for Agricultural sales. His pumpkin business in Georgia beat out the huge farms of the mid-west. Bradley said "one of the things that made a difference was the fact that I had award winning daffodils and that I had taken the time to enter them in the state competition. Even though most were from the youth category, it still documented that I must have done something half way right and wasn't making things up. Anyway, it's those things you don't think about when you're just a teenager, but later on in life it seems to matter." For more check out his website: www.bradleyweaver.com

The winter issue of **Washington Gardener** has a picture of one our youth members, **Sophia Masciarelli**. The article highlights the workings of the Washington Daffodil Society which has a very competitive youth section. As a member myself I must tell you that WDS has members from all over this country. Why? One reason for sure is the annual bulb order. Bulbs from around the world are carefully compiled to give members a chance to buy them without the usual high shipping costs from overseas. Plus U.S. growers offer good buys as well. And there are many collections to jump start your quest to finally have enough good flowers for a bigger entry at your show. For membership information contact **Kathy Welsh**, at 703-242-9783 or kathywelsh01@aol.com. Kathy is going to be the next American Daffodil Society president when she is sworn in at The National Show this spring in Murpheys California.

Another creative youth member, **Rachel Hankinson**, will have an article published in The Ohio Homeschool Companion called "Sweet Surprises" and she got to name an ice cream flavor!

Sierra Johnson, Of Napa, California has been mentoring a second grade class on how to grow daffodils, this including planting, fertilizing, weeding, tagging and looking up on www.dafseek.org the names and color codes of the flowers. She is hoping to enter the National Show this year as it is nearby to her home. She has won many ribbons but the ones from an ADS National Show are very special. Good luck!

Daffodil Stamps



The USPS has issued a stamp for the 2010 Chinese New Year featuring what they call the Chinese Sacred Lily. As you can see from the picture it's a daffodil NOT a lily! And it's not Chinese either. These flowers are known as *Narcissus tazetta ssp. lacticolor*. A cousin to the paperwhite they are often forced into bloom during the winter. But unlike the rather strong scent of the paperwhite the flowers give off a nicer citrus-y smell. The flowers are also two times the size of the paperwhite flowers. They are often used to celebrate the Chinese New Year so perhaps that's how the name came about. They are considered good luck for the coming year. Chinese immigrants brought the bulbs to the U.S. in the 1800's. But before that they travelled along the Silk Road with traders from Spain to China. So they are widely dispersed. On the USPS.org website you can order a block of the stamps and some really nice note cards with this image. And you have a sample of the stamp on this newsletter too! To purchase bulbs you can check out Brent and Becky Bulbs catalog.

Tips for the Show Bench

The freshness of your flower is so important! The flower should be of a good thick substance and not faded or crepey. And if there is dirt evident or rain spots clean them off with a small soft paint brush or Q-tip dipped in water. Be gentle! Twisting the flower head, or "clocking" is a way to make your flower symmetrical. You might want to practice with a flower you are not going to show first to get the feel for this. Too strong a turn and the flower head will snap off in your hand. You want your flower to look directly at you not up or down. There are exceptions of course like the multi-flowered types and the cyclamineus Division 6 ones that nod down like 'Rapture'. With 'Rapture', I have seen many unique ways to show it in a vase of three. One way was like a stop light with the blooms lined up on top of each other in a straight row facing right at you. It's fun to try new ways to show your flowers. Last year I did a Lavender mini collection of five bulbicodiums that were all different sizes and lined them up in a row from the biggest to the micro-mini size. It caught the judges' eye and won the ribbon!



Getting your flowers to the show undamaged is important too. Use cotton balls to wedge your flowers in your bottles so they don't swing wildly around and get bruised. Place them in the car out of the sunlight and keep your interior temperature cool. I transport my mini flowers in a large cooler with ice packs and they maintain their substance. I have test tubes which I sink in Oasis floral foam and wedge each flower with cotton balls. This way they are cool, in the dark and stable which is what you want.



Here is another way using a box and test tubes with cotton balls.

I like to keep a notebook of when and what I picked. Write the name of your daffodil on the stem with a ball point pen. Then later you can look up and record in your notebook the flower's division, color code and breeder. Why breeder? If you have five flowers bred in the U.S. then think about entering the Red-White-and Blue collection for a really nice ribbon.

Share your stories with us! Write to me at: 5906 Clevelandtown Road, Boonsboro, MD 21713 or email at MCA1062357@aol.com

Happy Spring! Kate Carney, ADS Youth Chair