



florida daffodil society news

ISSUE NO. 81

APRIL 2012

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday: May 12, 2012 at 9:15 A.M.
Goodwood Museum and Gardens
Jubilee House

The nominating committee will present the following slate of officers:

President- Lori Johnson
1st Vice President- Clara Jane Smith
2nd Vice President- Tiffany Bourassa
Secretary- Phyllis Graham
Treasurer – Pete Millett

An FDS board meeting will follow. The main item on the agenda is a discussion on FDS's role at the Goodwood Museum and Gardens.

All members are invited to attend both the annual and board meeting.

Annual Flower Show

This year's show was a success except for Saturday afternoon: suddenly it was very quiet and you could hear the storm coming. Emily Millett and Linda Van Beck abandoned ship. While the Show got only rain, a small storm cell zeroed on the Van Beck Garden with white vertical sheets of rain full of soft ice pellets. The daffodils survived and Linda remained standing!

As we expected fewer blooms this year, the black flower stands, cards and test tubes were set out on the green sheets with many stands holding more than one stem. The effect was informal and easy to read. With the help of Karen Kunz, we almost made the 10 a.m. opening -- we forgot to barricade the doors and there were lots of interruptions. One circular table held the bouquets of mixed picked flowers and the other held the flower arrangements. The FDS asked Lana Arnold to make a "Federal style" design with 'Avalanche' 8W-Y (as a representative historic tazetta). Each year we plan to have at least one arrangement that is indicative of the registered date of a provided historic cultivar. Janet Hicks (The Garden Club of Virginia) and Caroline Hawkins (George Daffodil Society and Georgia Garden Club) provided information and support for this project. Other designers were: Mary Maud Sharpe, Gunilla Trull and Charlotte Watkins. Greeters included: Lenny Kennedy, and Tiffany Bourassa. President Lori Johnson and long time helpers Bob and Jean Denk were unable to attend and were greatly missed.

N. italicus – Last year Linda Van Beck visited an old "rescue section" of Tallahassee only to find a single crinum. A visitor to the flower show solved the mystery. He had gotten permission from the vacant lot owner and had rescued the daffodils. When the bulbs bloomed, he found they were all *N. italicus*. This year Goodwood's bulb lawn garden had many tazettas blooming for the first time. Margaret Hood, who collected Paper Whites around the property, made a wedge shaped daffodil planting (all *N. italicus*) in front of one of her benches. Until now no one could see a path to the bench, but the foliage is now mature and the small path is visible.

We thank the members who emailed Linda Williams their comments on attending the open garden and the last newsletter. Loyce McKenzie, editor of the *The Daffodil Journal*, noticed the reference to daffodil fragrance. This was a "tongue in cheek" comment. We know that natural gas (ethane) has no odor, but a chemical odor ("Captan") is added so that we can tell that natural gas is present. Daffodils, like ripening fruit, emit odorless ethylene at the start of senescence. As Michael Jefferson Brown, the record holder for refrigerated blooms, said "The flower must be picked just before senescence starts – it is like ripening fruit- one bad apple starts the general decline." Fragrance is not the issue. Thanks to our "Floating Shower Caps" all of the Show daffodils were in perfect condition and because it was a wet refrigerator they looked fresh. The shower caps were made by crossing two sheets of saran wrap which were tucked lightly at the corners.

Every year our show looks different, partly because Tallahassee Nurseries is either shoring up or taking down or changing everything in general. Consistency is the green table cloths. This year we had 60 cultivars.

In the Garden

One could just say that this year exceeds all explanations, description of flower behavior and the weather in general. It's just crazy. Take good old 'Cragford' 8W-O. Two main beds of 100 bulbs each started blooming in January, more in February, still a few in March. At least they bloomed. Many have not. Many had one or two blooms per fifty bulbs. The early bloomers fared the best, but, as the 80 degree temperatures continued in and out, week after week, most gave up. 'Pueblo' 7W-W had the most blooms ever. 'Waterperry' 7W-YPP bloomed and so did 'Unsurpassable' 1Y-Y and we could go on. As an experiment a few clumps of 'Carlton' 2Y-Y were planted late. The FDS often has tried unsuccessfully to get

people to plant as soon as possible. Some are forgetful, some think it is not important and some like to pick up bargains off the internet. We all know the issue is heat and the prospects are poor perennialization. On the other hand, the flowers were very pretty and blooming when most of the world had turned green so it just might be worth it.

Life in Texas or how to solve your space problem: Grow Daffodils with Strawberries!

Plant daffodils 8" apart

1. put short strawberry plants in between
2. eat berries
3. pick daffodils
4. pull up strawberries
5. quit watering
6. plant parsley, garlic chives, dills and later cilantro – little watering required

Daffodil Photos for Identification Purposes

Unidentified flower? You need at least two photographs for someone to try to identify it. The first photograph should be a dead-on profile shot, showing profile of trumpet, rim and how the petals hold themselves. A second photograph should be a frontal shot, taken standing in front of the flower, but from slightly above and a little to one side (on a 15 degree angle) to show the rim, the petal form and how the petals are arranged. The camera tends to flatten the view. It is necessary to be able to get an indication of the age of the daffodil and one does this by zeroing in on "flattened and flexed" petals. Sometimes a "rear calyx view" is necessary to show how the petals come off the stem. You want to fill the frame with the flower, but the leaf does carry a lot of information- color and shape which helps one identify the daffodil (so consider a third shot of the whole plant). Unfortunately what you think you see and what you get is often caused by light reflection; it is easy to overexpose white petals (so all the detail gets lost). Try to photograph on a cloudy day, early in the morning or when the flower is in the shade.

Fertilizer for Poorly Blooming Large Clumps

Keith Kridler's recipe: Take one bucket; add 5 gallons of water; add five tablespoons of Miracle Grow or similar 20-20-20 fertilizer; buy one package of roach pills and dissolve a few in hot water then add a quarter to a half teaspoon to the mixture (boron is needed to help cell walls expand and elongate correctly). Over the course of a day pour the whole bucket on the clump of daffodils so that the water will leach down 16 inches or deeper. Wait two weeks and measure the flowers or take a photo. Repeat pouring in three weeks. The idea is to see if growth, size of leaves increases and if can come

up with a comparison with an untreated clump. If there is a difference, then you know your soil is lacking nutrients or the clump needs more sunshine. You can also compare bulb size when lifting. Remember daffodils will benefit from a soil ph 6.5 – 6.8.

The roots of trees really drain the soil of nutrients and, in many cases, bulbs should be dug to rid the soil of roots. Potash does help the bulbs carbohydrate cycle when it changes. It does not add much in the way of soil fertility except to help offset the acid in mulch and clay.

The Book

A few years ago, Linda Van Beck opened a book in a New Zealand botanic library and had a surprise. The book's title was *The Naming of Names* (2005), the author was Anna Pavord, and it was a 470 page definitive history of taxonomy. Two plates in the book were delightful to the daffodil enthusiast, although Pavord does not much discuss *Narcissus*.

Theophrastus (372-287 B.C) was the Greek who started it all, as he was the first person to study the naming and classifying of plants: "He is with you too as you bend to catch the spicy scent of narcissus or *narkissos*, as he wrote it. *Aspharagos, elleboros, skilla, anemone, iris, krokos* are all in his book." Pliny, the Roman, stole everything and he is the one remembered.

One noteworthy illustrative plate was a circa 1568 botanical illustration, complete with a Red Admiral butterfly in the corner. The delicate flowers were five *N. pseudonarcissus*, each in a different stage of development. The artist was Jacques le Moyne de Morgues (1530-1588). The signature de Morgues is rarely used today. Jacques le Moyne is recognized as the first European artist to paint Florida, and is why the local Tallahassee arts organization is named Le Moyne. The period of roughly 1530 to 1590 is when daffodils, tulips, muscari and other bulbs came in floods from the East, often via Turkey, to Europe.

Mindless Thoughts of Clarity

By Jeff Soderberg

In warming sun on some great hill
I wish I was a daffodil
Swaying forth relaxed and slow
Any way the wind should blow
Aloft nature's breeze
Putting my whole self at ease
No battles fought or hatred gained
It renders all the people sane
To look at life as it should be
And be just like the grandest tree
Who stretches forth with spreading limbs
That welcomes everybody in
Judging not of need or though
Protective shade is all they sought
In warming sun on some great hill
I wish I was a daffodil