

SOUTHERN REGION FALL NEWSLETTER
October 6, 1986

Membership: Alabama 15, Kentucky 23, Mississippi 36, Louisiana 5, Tennessee 50

three
We welcome two new members since our last newsletter:
Ms. Lydia C. Brawner, 536 South Gay, Auburn, Alabama 36830
Mrs. Thelma C. Warrington, 6557 Elmore Road, Memphis, Tennessee 38134
Mrs. Lundy P. Wilder, 9021 Wilderwood Lane, Cordova, Tennessee 38010
Mrs. Glenn Dooley of Bowling Green, Kentucky died in August. We express our sympathy to her family.

Fall has arrived, an unusually hot and dry one here in North Mississippi, the time for planting bulbs. It is an exciting time for me when the new bulbs start arriving, can't wait to open the package, take each bulb out, look it over with anticipation of the coming spring blooms. I plant as soon as the bulbs arrive, have been working on my beds all summer, and it doesn't take long to get them in the ground. My beds are built up, and filled with a mixture of garden soil, sand, compost and peat moss, and I usually add 0-20-20 fertilizer. In the summer when the beds are prepared they are mulched with oat or what straw, available on the farm, and pine needles when I can find them. With the mulch already on the beds, I pull back just enough to put the bulb in, then spread the mulch back in place. The soil is moist enough for the bulbs to make their roots, even with the dry weather we have had, and I do not have to water.

I wish to express my appreciation to Mrs. Wynant Dean, Louisville, Kentucky, Mrs. Alex W. Taylor, Franklin, Tennessee, Weldon T. Childers, Carbon Hill, Alabama and D. Q. Rankin, West Monroe, Louisiana for contributing to our news letter. If any of you would like to write an article for the next newsletter it would be more than welcome.

Mrs. Dean writes: When I moved to Louisville from the Philadelphia area in October of 1979 I brought with me approximately 250 varieties of daffodil bulbs. It was time to plant and there was no place to put them. We chose a location in the back yard that was protected by Magnolia grandifloras and hemlock trees for the future bed. After the 15'x30' space was roto-tilled the clay soil was enriched by the addition of peat humus and sand and the whole area was surrounded by a 3' high chain link fence to keep out neighborhood cats and dogs and OUR three male standard poodles.

I dug lengthwise trenches, put down 0-20-20 and covered the super phosphate with 4" of soil. Bulbs were nestled in, aluminum markers stuck behind each bulb and all covered with 6-8" of soil, leaving only the markers above ground. Either rain or soaker hoses took care of the watering.

In January the bed was mulched with pine needles (now I use straw) and fertilized with 6-24-24 potato fertilizer at spring emergence, again after blooming and in late September. This practice has continued for seven years.

Bulbs are lifted, soaked in a hot benolate solution and dried and replanted every three years. Miniatures and excess bulbs are planted around existing plantings of holly trees and other shrubs. Both old and new bulbs are dusted with benolate before planting. The bed is thoroughly had weeded three times during the summer. Soaker hoses are used during the growing season and on newly planted rows.

Some bulbs have been lost to basal rot but I have yet to see my first narcissus fly in Louisville. I hope I don't. (Biddy Dean)

I have very good soil for daffodils. Occasionally I add a little peat moss. Most of my blooms are used for cut flowers, furnishing local churches, frieds, and my classroom with arrangements and bouquets during the blooming season. I plant in rows in my garden, using a tablespoon of bone meal for each bulb when they go in the ground. After the foliage emerges in late winter, and just before blooming I side dress with a low-nitrogen commercial fertilizer. When I dig, I use benolate cold water treatment for basal rot, dust with Captan and store in mesh bags. After blooming season I spray with Dursban to prevent damage by narcissus flies. Since I have been taking these precautions, I have lost very few bulbs.

Some cultivars which grow especially well for me are: Bravoure 1 W-Y, Artic Gold 1 Y-Y, Butterscotch 2 Y-Y, Jubilation 2 W-Y, Ceylon 2 Y-O, New Day 7 W-Y, Jules Verne 2 W-Y, Paradise 2 W-W, and Fruit Cup 7 W-Y. There are others that I believe will do well, but I haven't had them very long and they have not stood the test of time as have those I mentioned.

Some of my favorites are: Lemon Glow 1 Y-Y for size and color, Georgia Moon 2 Y-Y for its delicate color, Cantabric 1 W-W for its beautiful form, and High Note 7 Y-W, Top Notch 2 Y-Y, Stainless 2 W-W, and Limpkin 2 W-WY for their all-round merit.

During the past few years I have given away over 1,200 bulbs to friends and neighbors who admired my flowers. Perhaps some will become interested enough to join the ADS, and take part in its activities. I hope to become more active myself after my retirement in a couple of years. (Weldon T. Childers)

REMEMBERING DAFFODILS AND THE OLD STORY

It seems I can always remember daffodils while growing up here in Northeast Louisiana, but only for the last eight years or so did I begin collecting cultivars not usually found here.

It also seems that for as long as I remember daffodils, I remember hearing the story- "Most daffodils do not do well here and many of the look alike"

Well, my experiences have led me to believe that this story is true. Of the several hundred that I have tried (from outside our area), about one-third have continued to perform well, but I'll bet most of this one-third should outlast me. And, of course, there are thousands I haven't tried. As for the other part of the story - I have been disappointed with favorites, but by purchasing look alikes from other sources, most of these disappointments have been erased.

My cultural practices differ little from those learned from other ADS members, like the well experienced people of Mississippi and Tennessee. For the newly interested I suggest: attend daffodil shows, meet daffodil people, and from them obtain bulbs already proven and acclimated near you. And be the first in your area to try some newer ones. (D. Q. Rankin)

As most of you know, I grow my little daffodils on a hillside that gets about 5-6 hours of sun in most places. The soil is a sandy loam with small rocks and neutral to slightly acid. I don't fertilize at all, but I am sure there is a certain amount of sustenance from leaf-mold formed from the leaves that drift down from the forest trees above and rot, as well as the rainfall that brings important trace elements. I have never noticed any particular difference between a rainy season and a dry one except that I get less bloom after a very dry season, which I attribute to lack of a sufficiently long season of top growth, that might be quite different if the hillside and type of soil didn't provide perfect drainage.

Most of the hybrids are more easily grown than the species except for the single Jonquilla and its variations. A few of the hybrids seem to have weak constitutions and are thus difficult to keep and slow to reproduce. Some I find difficult are Mary Plumstead, Cyclataz, Laura, Mitzy, and Opening Bid. I think Cyclataz is rather tender here. Laura I got from Australia, but it never came up. Opening Bid I kept two years. Mitzy I had bloom one year but it has never bloomed again, if I still have it.

I should explain that I don't grow my bulbs in regular beds. The bulbs are interspersed with other small bulbs, small rock garden plants, shrubs, small trees and wild flowers for landscape effect. For that reason, I not only use markers to locate them, but have a large diagram that I try to keep up-to-date. Nothing is more frustrating than having a nice tuft of foliage and no idea of what it might be. But it happens. Fortunately, some of these have turned out to be chance seedlings which I am now watching. I am very much opposed to the introduction of supposedly new varieties that are too much like others that are already on the market, or too delicate for successful growing. I have one sport, a white Tepolino, which may be worthy of notice. It is pure white, blooms later than other white trumpets, and seems to be small enough to be called a miniature. It seems to be increasing moderately well. Time will tell if it is good enough to name.

Another problem we miniature growers face too frequently is buying bulbs that are misnamed. I have gotten a few worth while ones that way and many very bad ones. Here are some of the guides in growing the work best for me:

1. Plant purchased bulbs as soon as possible after receipt, certainly by December 1st.
2. Some bulbs get accidentally covered too deeply with soil (they come up, but don't bloom)
If that happens I lift them carefully and replant them at once.
3. I don't lift bulbs unless they are very thick and bloom very little or seem unhappy in their present location. Then I lift and replant them immediately either dividing and spreading them into a drift or putting them into a more suitable spot.
4. Easily grown hybrids can be planted in a less well-drained spot.
5. Delicate species do best in a very well drained place.
6. The same seems to be true for Triandus hybrids.
7. Planting bulbs too close to trees doesn't work for me. Too much competition I think.
8. Pockets of good soil can be held by Burying rocks slant-wise. Don't take out all the little rocks. They contribute to good drainage. In fact, you might find it a good idea to add small rocks to your soil.
9. I leave delicate species strictly alone. They seem to resent being disturbed.
10. I find it good policy to examine plantings in winter after freezes and thaws very carefully. Many times I have to push little bulbs down or else replant them entirely. This is particularly true of new bulbs which have not had enough time to develop sufficient roots.

I hope I have not bored you too much, but when I get started I find I say too much. Good growing to all of you. (Alice Wray Taylor)