



# florida daffodil society news

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## WHAT THE WEATHER DID

It happened all across the lower South: spring was sprung! Weeks ago early blooming dafs started pushing up – first the December bloomers, and now January bloomers (N. *Italicus*). February bloomers have roots galore. The root spread on Erlicheer is over 4 inches on each side. As we write, Nony, Early Pearl and Paper Whites are blooming in Tallahassee and FDS members in Tennessee report the same. My first thought was how many people noticed the drought in early August. Everyone knew they got a lot of rain in July (14.06 inches in Tallahassee, 30 and 40 inches in South Georgia). Put the two together and the signal to the daffodils was “get started”, and so they did. The result was the blooming calendar was set ahead two months. Unfortunately, deciduous trees are on their usual course and many have not dropped their leaves, so some dafs are finding a lot of shade.

Florida’s blooming time is usually late when compared to other areas that get rain before October. Remember how the FDS harps on watering in October to get the carbohydrate cycle going? Maybe we should water early bloomers in August and see if we can control blooming and circumnavigate early frosts. Most of the early bloomers are not cold dependent. However, Soliel d’Or needs a nip of cool soils.

## PUBLIC PLANTINGS

- A1A Beautification: FDS annually supports this group through the donation of appropriate tazettas.
- Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens (affiliated with the University of Georgia): James Burghardt wanted to augment their daffodils. FDS gave a total of 200 bulbs.
- FDS distributed 100 bulbs to elementary schools and Girl Scouts.

Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens is a place we visited while John Van Beck was still testing daffodils. He was very proud of his picked blooms nesting in their test tubes. Someone put them in the refrigerator and the next morning when he gave his talk he found frozen daffodils. On this trip we noticed a garden of daffodils in Argile, GA. Later, we rescued tons of daffodils, the most important of which was later registered as Nat Williams. This year over 2,000 Nat Williams from the rescued batch were sent to Bill the Bulb Baron and another 2,000+ will go next year. The goal is to make commercially available an early blooming tazetta that is part of America’s garden history.

## INTERIM BULB SALE REPORT

Bulb sales got off to a slow start. We received only half the usual orders from FDS members. Then, Boom! We are off and running. Quincy Garden Club started it with a purchase of 1,917 bulbs. In the end, there were 12 “vendors” who sold or distributed 10,500 bulbs in Louisiana, Georgia and Florida. We would like to thank the following hard-working people:

Jan Bates	Sue Henderson
Harlie Bodine	Alicia Lamborn
Evalyn Cabell	Sara Van Beck
Julia Groce	The Palm Coast
Deb Hamilton	Gang

## SUMMER READING

Although there is a lot of talk about roots, A. R. Rees, in his book The Growth of Bulbs, maintains that bulbs contain a large amount of stored “food” reserves which makes bulb development possible in conditions of severe competition. Rees says bulb size is important as daffodils have a branching system, i.e., daughter bulbs, which means

more apices – each producing aerial leaves and/or flowers. An apex is the bump of the top of the meristem (growth point of the bulb. Have you ever peeked at your bulbs to see when the point comes up and when it changes from white to green? As a rule, from the time the point makes a stalk and leaves appear, it is usually a month until blooming time.

What the FDS has been doing is purchasing landscape size Carlton, Ice Follies and Fortune, i.e., smaller cheaper bulbs, as the attitude has been ‘big bulbs are full of water and all we do in the South is shrink them.’

After reading Rees, I called Carl, our main supplier. He said “big bulbs make big flowers. The bigger the bulb, the bigger the flower.” Well, obviously, this axiom has limits and would basically apply to divisions 1, 2 and 8. Although I saw big Thalia bulbs (Div. 5) available locally.

For FDS to provide bigger bulbs, it would cost 10¢ to 15¢ more for 12/14 cms to 14/16 cms bulbs. As next year marks the 20th anniversary of FDS, we plan to celebrate with bigger blooms. To avoid shrinkage, we need

to provide what the bulb really wants: loose soil, no moles, plenty of water from coming up to blooming, full sun, hot summer, trace minerals, and benign neglect.

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## FLOWER REMOVAL

In 1954, Kalin studied the effects of flower removal on bulb production and concluded that the peduncle “stalk bearing flower” is an important site for photosynthesis and hence should be retained for efficient bulb production. Dead heading improved bulb weight and should be practiced, whereas flower picking reduced weight. This is why the FDS cautions against heavy pickings and recommends not picking the first year.

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## FDS MEMBERSHIP

We have 109 active paid-up members. It is not too late to send in your membership dues for 2014 to remain on the Newsletter and Bulb Sale mailing list. Greetings to our new members!

*Karen Kuntz, Membership Chair*



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## PICS FROM THE FLOWER SHOW



Left: Past President Linda Van Beck and visiting daffodilian

Center: Grand Primo parade

Right: Future daffodilians