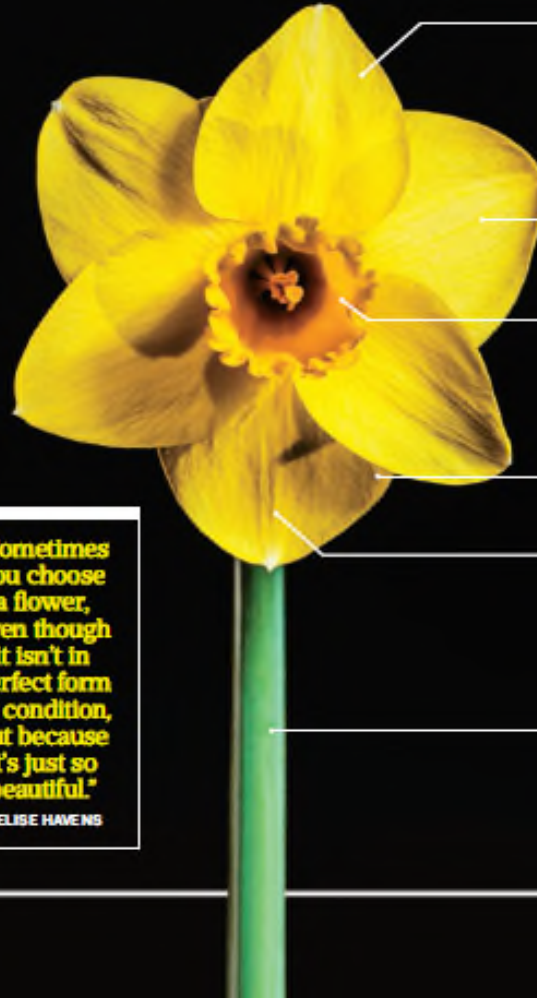


## Diagram of a Winner

"It was harder to become a daffodil judge than it was to get my master's degree," says Karen Cogar of Alexandria, Virginia, only half joking. The process requires holding a membership with the ADS and passing three schools—each composed of classes, written tests, and an identification test. Then you must student-judge three shows, pass an evaluation by accredited judges, and grow at least 100 different selections of daffodils on your own. You must also exhibit daffodils in ADS-approved shows for at least three years and win at least five blue ribbons. All of these requirements need to be completed within a five-year period. Read on for the winning points.



### **SUBSTANCE AND TEXTURE**

A first flower has a heavy substance and a smooth texture. Flowers are called "crappy" when they pass their prime and become thin, wrinkled, and translucent. "More often than not," explains Elise Havens, "the judging comes down to which flower is more alive."

### **PLATONIC IDEAL**

A specimen must be a good representation of its selection in color, size, and form.

### **CLEAN EDGES**

The daffodil's petals and cup are free of any nicks, tears, burns, and misshapen growths. (Burns, when a microorganism dries and turns brown, are caused by heat—either from the sun or a too-hot car trunk.)

### **POSE**

The bloom faces the viewer at a right angle from the stem.

### **PLANE**

The petals appear as if they're flat against a sheet of paper (exceptions: if the specimen is from a selection with petals that are supposed to flex away from the cup or with petal edges that are meant to curve in or ripple).

### **STEM**

Daffodil stems should be straight, neither bowed nor twisted.

"Sometimes you choose a flower, even though it isn't in perfect form or condition, but because it's just so beautiful."

—ELISE HAVENS