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florida daffodil society news

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SPRING SPRUNG EARLY

When the deluge came before the two weeks of drought that ended September, the alarm clocks went off. The deluge is supposed to happen after September, so we are having Christmas closer to Thanksgiving. This is "Tazetta Time." The list of bloomers is long. Of note is 'Sheleg' 8W-W* (didn't bloom last year), 'Nir' 8W-W that is the same size as our own smallest Paper White (most from Madison, FL), 'Miss Lindsay' 8W-W which turns out to be a pearl (three day cup fade and our rarest tazetta). Chinese Scared Lily 8W-Y and Autumn Pearl 8W-Y, are putting on a big show. In the midst of all these white flowers is a huge surprise: a tiny, yellow, bullnosed, double tazetta. David Watkins of the Natchez, MS area gave us the bulb, but he was unable to identify it. *See photos on page two.*

*Number is division, first letter is color of petals, second letter is color of cup.

WHERE DID ALL THE BULBS GO?

As most of you know, the FDS, with help from the Master Gardeners of Santa Rosa and Duval Counties (Mandarin) got us off to a great start. This year we ordered 20,800 bulbs. Our usual venders and individual FDS members put in good orders, but disaster struck. Fewer than 10 people showed up for the Chipley Master Gardener sale and program. Luck was with us. First, Linda took to the telephone and sold 100 bulbs a day. Then we lucked up with Gilchrist Elementary School, where Jinny Stewart and her professional gardener, Christine Parrish, put in a very large bed. Brenda Pratt (Tallahassee City Parks) allowed the FDS to plant yellow dafs around the John Van Beck memorial stone in McCord Park as well as in the new Cascades Park, where the British gardener in charge of the park missed his daffys. Members bought more bulbs but there were still a lot left. The Van Beck Garden participates in the open garden program sponsored by the American Daffodil Society. A recent storm had damaged trees at the entrance. Their removal left a big, bare, sunny space. Voila – new large daffodil beds were needed and serve as the

center of the daffodil garden, which is on view by appointment (850-878-9753) or at public days to be announced in the spring.

CLAY NOTES

In much of north Florida, as soon as you dig you hit clay and bring it up to the surface. Clay is *not* a friend to daffodils.

Our solution was using a cubic yard of the poorest "soil" we could purchase, which was composed of half white beach sand with small stones and half gray sandy soil. The beds were cleared of roots, etc. to shovel depth and raked smooth. The sand was thrown on top of the cleared beds, then turned in. You could see and feel the sand absorbing the moisture. When the bulbs were put in, a little sand mix was put in the bottom of each hole – so the bulbs got to "sit at the beach".

THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

The root system of mature narcissus, tulip and hyacinth bulbs are hairless, unbranched, have a prominent root cap and are entirely adventitious (new roots produced each year). The primary root of the original seedling is long gone. There are two kinds of roots: contractile (holding the bulb in the ground) and feeding roots.

In all perennial bulbs, roots emerge in late summer. They are formed over a short period of time and emerge more or less together. If the bulb is out of the ground, i.e., in storage, low humidity helps prevent root formation. If the bulb does make any roots, and those roots are inadvertently damaged in handling, the bulb cannot repair or make new roots.

Daffodils have strong contractile roots which can pull the bulb deeper into the soil or aid the bulb to obtain a vertical position. These roots disappear in a short period of time, leaving only the feeder roots.

NORTH FLORIDA NEWS



Dara Dobson is a North Florida plant expert, consultant and now business owner selling North Florida native perennial species of flowers, shrubs and trees. A longtime member of the FDS, Dara has planted hundreds of daffodils on her farm and this year became a FDS vendor. She plans to pot up her “leftovers” for spring sales.

The 7 Pines Native Nursery is located near DeFuniak Springs. It is always open the third Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the month, and for group tours. Check out her website (www.wildflowersmatter@dufuniak.com) or call her at 850-830-8996.



Nir



Miss Lindsay



Natchez Unknown



Autumn Pearl



Sheleg - rear view



Chinese Sacred Lily