

Geraldine daffodil farm is on the market



ESTHER ASHBY-COVENTRY/FAIRFAX NZ

Even a gloomy day is brightened by blooms at Cindy and Gordon Coombes' Pleasant Valley Daffodil farm, near Geraldine, which they have put up for sale.

Ads by Google

[7-Day Weather Forecast](#)[freelocalweather.com](#)

Local Weather Forecast. Severe Weather Alerts & Radar Maps

To see a flower you have bred for the first time is like holding your own baby, Te Moana daffodil breeder Gordon Coombes says.

Heaven Eleven is his favourite daffodil he ever bred but after 23 years he's ready to pass his breeding ground on.

Gordon and wife Cindy have officially named about 40 of the flowers they have bred.

"We have probably bred hundreds but we only pick the best," he said.

Their two sons have not shown any interest in taking on the family business, so the couple have put the farm on the market.

They sell about 70,000 bulbs a year nationally.

Gordon grew up at Pleasant Valley Daffodils when his stepfather Colin Crotty and mother Ness started the business in 1977. The Coombes took it over in 1993.

"My stepdad had farmed all his life and someone had a stock of daffodil bulbs which he started out with in the early 1970s. It was trial and error."

The business had been upscaled, through the use of computers, a far cry from the pen and paper docket his stepdad used.

"It's been a great lifestyle."

[Ad Feedback](#)

Breeding takes patience and time. Heaven Eleven is a "division 11" flower with a split cup. Six segments of the cup fold back against the petals.

To name a new flower officially, details have to be sent and approved by the Royal Horticultural Society in England.

Cross pollinating between flowers may not always offer the desired effect as some may be infertile, Gordon said.

"The seed pod behind the bloom swells up if it takes ... there could be one or 20 seeds in a pod."

It will then be five years before it flowers for the first time and 12 to 15 years to get a saleable stock.

Cindy recalled how when they moved to the daffodil farm, their children were 24 months and one month old.

"Everyone helped with them and some of those customers still come back," she said.

The couple hope to sell the 8.5 hectares, of which two hectares is daffodils, and their three-bedroom home as a going concern, as they would love to see the daffodils continue.