

# In The Garden | Daffodils have widespread appeal in April

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*(Photo: Richard Poffenbaugh Photo.)*

My interest in daffodils began in the late 1970s while a new member of the Mansfield Men's Garden Club and teacher at Mansfield Senior High School. For an MGC program, I invited Wells Knierim from Cleveland to present a program about daffodils.

Wells was retired from Ohio Bell after 40 years of service. He was a veteran daffodil grower and popular speaker on this colorful spring flower. He brought to the meeting several large bags of daffodil bulbs for club members to take home and plant. Several years later, when he found out I was teaching a home horticulture course, he shipped a large box of daffodil bulbs for students to plant.

That gift of bulbs became the largest planting of daffodils ever on the campus of Mansfield Senior High School. It was a student project never to be forgotten.

## Variations among daffodils

Daffodils are grouped into 12 different types according to size and flower structure. Today's photo is a smaller size named Rapture. The petals look like they are blown backwards by a fan or wind, called a reflexed flower.

A daffodil flower has a cup or trumpet along with six petals. The flower may be of one color or a mix of different colors.

## Daffodils are survivors

A major trait of a daffodil is a long life. If you plant 24 bulbs this fall in the right site, in three to four years they should multiply to 24 more bulbs. This is also double the color attraction.

The major danger to a daffodil bulb is water, like wet soil. This is common among most bulbs. A bulb in wet soil will rot the first growing season.

Otherwise, a daffodil bulb will survive during your lifetime and beyond. We have daffodils that have been blooming since 1960, an amazing 58 years!

## How to plant a rose

April and early May are prime times to plant a bare root rose. A potted rose can be planted into midsummer, which will give the most blooms in late summer and fall.

Most bare root roses are those ordered from a catalog. For special roses, this is necessary, as they may not be available locally.

Follow these tips:

- For a bare root plant, soak roots in lukewarm water for 12 to 24 hours. If the rose isn't to be planted immediately, leave rose in shipping box up to a week in a cool dark place. Sprinkle water on them ever few days.
- Dig the hole 12 inches deep and 24 inches wide in plant site with plenty of sun. Loosen soil at bottom and sides with shovel or spade.
- Fill hole with water. It should drain in an hour. If water drains slower, dig deeper for better drainage. Do not plant in a low spot where water collects.
- Build a mound of soil in center of hold to support bare roots. Work some soil carefully among the bare roots. Be sure the point where stems and root join are at ground level or slightly lower. A shrub rose grows on its own roots and is a much better survivor during a clod winter. This applies to newer Knock Out roses. Other grafted roses should be planted at least an inch below ground for better winter protection.
- Fill hold with two-thirds remaining soil mixed with peat moss or compost. Tamp down gently with your hands. Add water and let it soak up. Finish filling hole with soil. Tamp down lightly and water the plating.
- Spread mulch around plant to prevent weed growth and help retain moisture. Soil should be kept moist to the touch, but not wet until leaves start growth. After planting is established, it needs one inch of water per week.
- The plant will leaf out faster if you mist canes as often as possible while they are getting started. Roses need plenty of moisture, both above and below soil, for health development.

In our growing area, the first strong bloom period will be form late summer through October. As other flowers wind down in October, roses offer strong color appear. The second year flowering will begin fully in June.

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