

Think beyond yellow for daffodils this fall



This peach and white daffodil is named Sweet Smiles. It is among a number of daffodils that bring colors other than yellow to the spring garden. **Handout** Brent and Becky's Bulbs

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The color identified with daffodils is yellow. Glorious, sunny yellow. Who could live without a large patch of yellow daffodils in March? Not me.

But I also like pink, and fortunately the daffodil world has some very nice offerings in shades of pink. They are a great way to expand your spring bulb palette and appeal to your own taste for this color. So why overlook it when you shop for bulbs in stores, web sites and catalogs this fall?

There are not, of course, as many choices in pink as yellow. But there are enough. Throw in a splash of other non-traditional daffodil colors such as white, cream and even orange and you have a deliciously diverse flower bed for early to mid-spring.

Among my favorites is Salome. This is partly because it is widely available and a reliable repeat bloomer. The trumpet portion opens a very fresh light peach and matures to a light salmon. A creamy frill surrounds the trumpet.

Another old favorite in the no-yellow category is Ice Follies, whose center opens light lemon yellow, but quickly becomes white. This is also a reliable choice, widely sold, and should return for many years. A third favorite, to keep the season going into April is Thalia, which is smallish, pure white and has a nice daffodil scent.

You will see more choices than you might have imagined among the boxes of bulbs and the listings in catalogs and web sites. Even orange. That brings me to the subject of Professor Einstein. It has a flat, bright orange-red center surrounded by white petals and is packed with vigor. Look at all of them and adjust your thinking beyond yellow when you start looking.

All daffodil bulbs require well-drained soil to keep them from rotting over the winter. Lightening the bed with compost will help improve this drainage. The larger daffodils should go 8 inches deep, the smaller bulbs, about 6 inches deep. Fertilize the beds with a fertilizer formulated for bulbs at the rate directed on the package.

Bulb beds can stand alone or you can mix daffodils into spots of flower beds left vacant when summer annuals are taken out. Many gardeners, especially those short on space finish off their daffodil planting with a layer of pansies or violas planted on top. This is where you can truly enjoy making an appealing color combination such as dark blue or violet pansies or violas with pink daffodils.

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