

## Name that Daffodil!

December, 1997

What's in a name? Have you ever wondered how daffodils get their names? If you're a daffodil breeder and hope some of your daffodils might someday see the world beyond your garden, you should register your chosen name with the International Registrar. For daffodils, that would be the Royal Horticultural Society in England, though national daffodil societies usually accept the forms and forward them to the RHS as a service to their members. You would have to follow the conventions set out in the *International Code of Nomenclature for Cultivated Plants*. This covers the length of the name, similarity to previously registered names, etc. You cannot use a name that has been registered previously, even if the cultivar may no longer exist.

So, you've followed all the rules and you're ready to name your wonderful new daffodil! What now? What have others done?

Many breeders have named their daffodils after place names. In fact, it's often been said that it was nice of the Irish to name so many of their towns after daffodils! Or is it the other way round? 'Limerick', 'Galway', 'Downpatrick', 'Newcastle', 'Sligo' and 'Portrush' have all given their names to daffodils. The late Guy Wilson, famous for his white daffodils, named one for his home village, 'Broughshane', and two of his best the 'Empress of Ireland' and 'Ulster Queen'. Lionel Richardson, a friend and competitor of Guy's, named some of his for race horses, especially Derby winners. Thus we have 'Red Rum'.

The British raiser John Lea, famed for his red and yellow daffodils, gave us a series of barely pronounceable names from his favorite salmon-fishing areas in Scotland: 'Suisgill', 'Cairn Toul', 'Creagh Dubh', 'Dalhauine', and 'Loch Owskeich', to name but a few.



Other raisers seem to favor certain categories for certain types of daffodils. Brian Duncan, in Northern Ireland, has a series of pink and white doubles named for hotels including 'Dorchester', 'Waldorf Astoria', 'Grosvenor', and 'Swallow Hotel' (pictured).

Mr. Duncan also has a series of white daffodils named for famous golf courses: 'Muirfield', 'Troon', and 'Birkdale'. His daffodil names also reflect places he has visited, including 'Pismo Beach', 'Zion Canyon', 'Masai Mara', and 'Chapman's Peak'. And he has a series of orange-petalled flowers which he named 'Bossa Nova', 'Charleston', and 'Limbo'. Doesn't that make you want to dance??

Max Hamilton in New Zealand has also used place names, and includes "Kiwi" as part of the name of his double daffodils: 'Kiwi Sunset', 'Kiwi Magic', and 'Kiwi

Solstice'. His daffodil partner, Peter Ramsay, likes to include the word "Cameo" in his names, and so we have 'Cameo King', 'Cameo Rim', and 'Cameo Angel'.

David Jackson, in Tasmania, has given us 'Taxation', 'Loophole', and 'Overdraft'. Hmmmm, wonder if he was naming flowers at tax time?

Also in Tasmania, Rod Barwick has named one 'Wild Women'. He says it got that name because it won Best Bloom as a seedling at a show, and "the women just went wild!"



Here in the United States, Grant Mitsch, the dean of American hybridizers, has given us a series of daffodils named for birds. 'Swallow' (pictured), 'Gull', 'Bittern', 'Cockatiel', and 'Warbler', are just a few. His daughter, Elise Havens, has continued the tradition with 'Scarlet Tanager'. The American Daffodil Society rents a slide program called "Birds and their Daffodil Namesakes." For more information, contact the ADS at [www.mc.edu/~adswww](http://www.mc.edu/~adswww). The Mitsch/Havens firm have also used musical names for their flowers, including 'Amadeus', 'La Traviata', 'Piano Concerto', 'Angelic Choir', and 'Bridal Chorus'. American place names also find their way into the listing: 'Denali', 'Queen City' named for the city of Cincinnati, and 'El Capitan'. Several of their flowers bear the prefix "Oregon."

Murray Evans, a good friend and neighbor of Grant Mitsch's, also liked to fish, and so we have 'Arctic Char', 'Tye', and 'Royal Coachman'. Mr. Evans also used place names 'Yosemite' and 'Yellowstone'.

Bill Pannill, the foremost amateur daffodil raiser in the United States, has kindly donated the privilege of naming daffodils to fundraising groups. One successful bidder was a lady who wanted to name it for her daughter. Mr. Pannill offered the lady her choice of types of daffodils, but the lady said she wanted a "big yellow one" and so we have 'Lizzie Hop', the nickname of the lady's daughter. Mr. Pannill has also named one 'Our Tempie' for a president of the National Council of State Garden Clubs.

Daffodil breeders must be a romantic bunch, as there are daffodils named 'Lovable', 'Love Child', 'Lovenest', 'Love Song', 'Dear Love', 'Heartthrob', 'My Love', and 'First Love'. And of course a lot of poeticus hybrids have been named for poets.

Every daffodil name has a story behind it; some are funny; some are poignant; some are named to honor someone. There is even a daffodil named 'Aspirin'. Can you imagine how the raiser was feeling that day???