

## Daffodils in Summer?

July, 1998

No, there really aren't any daffodils that bloom in summer of which I'm aware. By now, if you had planned to dig any bulbs, they are probably dug and carefully stored for fall planting. Or you could have replanted immediately. Any remaining foliage can now be pulled away, as surely it's been six weeks since the bulbs finished blooming. Try to fill in the holes left by the foliage a bit—use a hoe, or even your foot. This will eliminate a direct path to your bulbs that any bugs might want to follow. So now maybe it's time to sit in the shade and sip some lemonade and “surf” some catalogs.

If you've never ordered bulbs by mail before, this might be a good time to try. Check out the list of SPECIALIST growers on The American Daffodil Society home page (see links) and write for a few catalogs. (The Mitsch and Duncan catalogs have beautiful colored photos, with true color as the flowers grow in Oregon and Ireland. There may be a small catalog charge.) You'll find a much larger selection than you will at your local garden store in the fall. But do it soon, as you should get your order in by the end of July. I emphasize specialist growers as these people grow their own bulbs, and are very customer friendly. You might be in for a little “sticker shock,” as new introductions can be quite expensive. But a lot of years of work have gone into those new introductions.

In most catalogs, you'll find the cultivar name followed by a series of numbers and letters. For instance, you might see 'Tonga' 4 Y-R. The 4 Y-R is the classification, and is a shorthand way of describing the flower. The 4 refers to the division, in this case doubles, to which the flower belongs; the letter(s) before the hyphen describe the perianth or petals, in this case yellow; and the letter(s) following the hyphen describe the cup or corona. Most doubles don't have cups, so the red corona segments are interspersed among the perianth segments. (For a more-complete, illustrated definition of the classification system, email me privately at the above address. If you don't have Word, ask for the text-only version.) Most catalogs will also give an indication of the season of bloom. Some catalogs use letters, like E for early, M for midseason, L for late, etc., and some use numbers 1 to 6, with one being early and six late. By choosing cultivars in a variety of blooming times, you can extend the flowering season in your garden.

Let's look at some of the moderately priced daffodils. “Moderately” is a relative term. What would you pay for a quart-sized perennial at your garden store? \$3? \$4? Daffodils are perennials, too, so we'll try to stay within those prices. And it's perfectly all right to order only one bulb of a cultivar. That's what most specialists do, and that one bulb will soon grow into a nice clump in your garden.

To begin the season, try the miniature yellow trumpet, 'Bagatelle' and a couple of cyclamineus hybrids, the all white 'Cazique' and red and orange 'Jetfire.'. 'Falstaff', a yellow and red large-cupped daffodil follows soon after. The color stands up well in the garden and the blooms last a long time. Some other yellow and red/orange daffodils worth a place in any garden are 'Twicer', 'Shining Light', 'Sportsman', and 'Bantam'. 'Bantam' is smaller in stature, sometimes referred to as “intermediate” size. If your

garden is smallish, this one may be for you. If you want the traditional yellow trumpet daffodil, try 'Arctic Gold'. And if white daffodils suit your fancy, try 'Ashmore', 'Angel', 'Williamsburg', 'Misty Glen', 'Broomhill', or 'Ave'. How could you pass up 'Dainty Miss'? This jonquil hybrid has pristine white, perfect, intermediate-sized blooms which are produced in abundance.

How about pink and white daffodils? Try 'Decoy'. Officially, the color is white and red, but in my climate it comes a really deep reddish-pink shade. Others to try include the large cups 'Vantage', with a pink-rimmed cup; 'Jewel Song', and 'Accent'. Pink also comes in other divisions. Try 'Bell Song', a pink and white jonquil hybrid; or 'Delia' and 'Foundling', both cyclamineus hybrids.

Double daffodils? No problem. All yellow 'Elixir' and white and orange 'Acropolis' both meet our requirements. 'Tonga,' mentioned above does, too.

At season's end, the miniature 'Pixie's Sister' is a delight. Usually two, sometimes three, fragrant yellow florets seem to say, "Look at me!" 'Tripartite', an unusual split-corona daffodil with up to three yellow blooms on a stem is a real charmer.

And to go with your lemonade, how about some lemon-colored flowers? Try 'Daydream', 'Chelan', 'Hillstar', and 'Intrigue'. 'Intrigue' is the latest Wister Award winner of The American Daffodil Society. That means it should do well in gardens all over the country. How much better can you get than that?