

SMALL AND MINIATURE DAFFODILS

September, 1998

If you garden in a small area and think you have no room for daffodils, or if you have a rock garden, perhaps the smaller daffodils will fit into your garden scheme.

Daffodils come in all sizes, from ½ inch blooms on two-inch stems, to five-inch blooms on two-foot stems, so it's easy to find something that fits in your garden. Small daffodils have been around for ages; in fact, many of the species are small. In the early years of hybridizing, most breeders were looking for larger blooms to make a bigger impact in the garden; and many times the smaller ones were discarded as having no value. Alec Gray, in England, and Roberta Watrous, in the United States, were the first whose intent was actually to breed smaller daffodils. As many of the miniature daffodils are not many generations removed from their wild ancestors, they may require a bit more care to live long and prosper.

For exhibition purposes, The American Daffodil Society has established a list of cultivars which may be entered in classes only for miniature daffodils. If you want that list, email me at the address above and I'll be happy to send it.

But for our gardens, we can choose from the miniatures and other small daffodils to add beauty to our spring gardens. Small and miniature daffodils have the added attraction of smaller foliage which is less intrusive after the blooms are gone. By choosing early-blooming and late-blooming cultivars, you can also have a longer season of bloom.



The miniature trumpets usually begin the season several weeks ahead of their bigger brethren. Look for 'Bagatelle', 'Wee Bee', 'Little Gem', or 'Small Talk'. Plant them along the south side of your house, or on the south side of a rock for even earlier bloom. Sisters 'Jumblie', 'Quince', and 'Tete-a-Tete' (pictured) join the early parade, and come with several blooms per stem. You'll have no trouble finding 'Tete-a-

Tete' at your local garden store this fall. Not miniature, but certainly small, is 'Jack Snipe' with white swept-back petals and a yellow cup. All yellow 'Rapture' has been awarded the ADS Wister Award for garden excellence. Its petals sweep back severely, in the manner of its species parent, *N. cyclamineus*. 'Jetfire' and 'Emperor's Waltz' in yellow and orange add early color, while 'Cazique' and 'Durango' are all white. All yellow 'Sweetness' is a wonderfully fragrant flower, and the bulbs multiply rapidly. The name describes it perfectly.



Later in the season, yellow and red 'Bantam' is a choice addition to the garden. All white 'Elrond' and 'Elwing' are fitting companions. 'Mary Lou' is perfect for the front of the border. 'Reggae' (pictured) and 'Tiger Moth' in white and pink are fine companions. 'Sidhe', a Cornish fairy, is perhaps a bit tall, but it is so airy and graceful that I think it meets our requirements. Its light yellow, pendent blooms usually come two or three to a stem. 'Dainty Miss' is an absolute delight! The small pure white blossoms, one to a stem, are borne in profusion. Every bloom is perfect; I know I can always count on it for exhibition purposes as well as making a wonderful display in the garden. The pink and white 'Delia' backed with *Mertensia virginica* makes a lovely picture in a shady corner of my garden. But beware: the *Mertensia* will seed about and soon take over the garden.



Late in the season, I wouldn't want to be without 'Hawera' or 'April Tears'. These two cultivars are very similar, and the former is often substituted for the latter. But either would be delightful in the garden. Much pricier, but of similar form, are 'Woodstar' and 'Angel's Whisper' (pictured). The latter has an added bonus of fragrance. Bringing down the curtain on daffodil season are the jonquil hybrids 'Bebop', 'Sun Disc', and 'Stafford'. Last of all, blooming with the latest poets, is 'Baby Moon', with several very fragrant florets to the stem. The fragrance and the memories linger on.

SOURCES FOR SMALL AND MINIATURE DAFFODILS: (Specialists who grow their own bulbs, but you must hurry if you want to order by mail.)

Grant E. Mitsch Novelty Daffodils, P.O. Box 218, Hubbard, OR 97032; havensr@web-ster.com; www.web-ster.com/havens/mitsch/

Bonnie Brae Gardens, P.O. Box 342, Corbett, OR 97019

Delia Bankhead, 118 Chickadee Circle, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Nancy R. Wilson, 6525 Briceland-Thorn Rd., Garberville, CA 95542; nwilson@asis.com

R.A. Scamp, 14 Roscarrack Close, Falmouth, Cornwall TR11 4PJ, England

Glenbrook Bulb Farm, 28 Russell Rd., Claremont, Tasmania 7011, Australia

IMPORTED BULBS:

Brent and Becky's Bulbs, 7463 Heath Trail, Gloucester, VA 23061;
www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com

McClure and Zimmerman, P.O. Box 368, Friesland, WI 53935-0368; info@mzbulb.com