

A Dozen Favorite Daffodils December, 1998

If I were forced to choose only a dozen daffodils to grow in the future, and discard all the rest of my bulbs, it would be a sad day indeed. But it makes an interesting exercise: just what daffodils do I really like?

I think it's easier to say which ones I wouldn't include in my top twelve. I probably wouldn't include any of the triandrus hybrids from Division 5, because they don't grow well for me. But there are some lovely flowers in this division, including the miniatures 'Woodstar', 'Angel's Whisper', 'April Tears', and the standards 'Jingle Bells' and 'Ice Wings'.

And I probably wouldn't include any from Division 8, the tazettas, either, even though their fragrance is wonderful. 'Geranium' is wonderful in the garden, and just walking past it you catch the wonderful fragrance.

Nor would the doubles in Division 4 make my Top Twelve List, because in my climate they are prone to "blasting." Sometimes they are only slightly deformed with green on the back petals, while other times the bud never opens at all. But if you CAN grow double daffodils, then you really ought to try the all yellow 'Elixir', 'Tonga' in yellow and red, the white and yellow 'Unique', or 'Pink Paradise' in white and pink.



Ok, so what do I like? Well, I like pink and white daffodils, and I think 'Fragrant Rose' (pictured) is probably my favorite of this type. It grows well, increases quickly, I can always cut blooms for exhibition—I can count on it to be good year after year. 'Refrain' and 'Culmination' always have good pink color, and the newer and still expensive 'Cape Point' and 'Fine Romance' are fine flowers. I especially like the very flat perianth on 'Cape Point', which would seem to make it a good flower for breeding. 'Ethereal Beauty', with its palest pink rim, is exquisite. 'Notre Dame', with its green eye and yellow cup edged pink, is a favorite late in the season.

I also like white daffodils. I would hate to be without 'River Queen' or 'Silk Cut'. Almost every flower is perfect, and can be cut for exhibition without any grooming needed. 'Ashmore', with its deep green eye is stunning. 'Dainty Miss' has icy white small flowers borne in profusion. 'Dallas', which blooms late in the season, is so white, that one breeder used to compare all his white seedlings to it and say, "Now, is it white?" Milk-white 'Fastidious' has a name which describes the flower perfectly. 'Immaculate' is another whose name aptly describes the flower. 'Phoenician' is a flower of regal bearing on a strong stem. Other whites that I like

include the very round 'Cool Crystal', the late blooming 'Inverpolly', 'Stoke Charity', and the elegant 'Lady Diana'.



'Altun Ha' is a reverse bicolor on a strong tall stem and the flowers are impressive. The cup turns white quickly. 'Geometrics' (pictured) in white and yellow is very precisely formed; before it got its formal name, it was called "Cookie Cutter" for the precision of its blooms. 'Merlin' and 'Dress Circle' with their small cups edged in red are two I would hate to be without. 'La Paloma' is another in the same color scheme.

I haven't mentioned yellow daffodils yet, because yellow is not one of my favorite colors. But there are many fine yellow daffodils. Some I like are 'Amber Castle' with its rounded form; the newer 'Caithness'; 'Glissando' is a fine flower which grows to become an outstanding flower as it develops on the plant. 'Golden Sheen', 'Nynja', and 'Miss Primm' are fine yellow flowers. In yellow and reds, I like 'Surrey' for its brightness and consistency. 'Jambo' and 'Polbathic' are other favorites.



I dabble a bit at hybridizing, and so I have to include a few of my own flowers. A little miniature trumpet, still under number, begins my season, and I like it for its extreme earliness. Later in the season, it probably wouldn't get a second look. And my 'Happy Ending', a small double on wiry stems, brings the curtain down at the very end of the season. It has a flaw, however, as sometimes the flowers are single instead of double. My husband says my

'Montpier' (pictured), white with a small yellow cup, is the best flower in the garden. And I certainly wouldn't want to argue with my husband.

So, let's see, my top twelve, in no particular order would be 'Fragrant Rose', 'Notre Dame', 'River Queen', 'Silk Cut', 'Dainty Miss', 'Immaculate', 'Who's Who', 'Dress Circle', 'Merlin', 'Altun Ha', 'Surrey', and 'Geometrics'. And of course, my seedlings. No, wait, maybe I should include 'Cape Point', or 'Dallas', or 'Phoenician' or . . .