

My Garden in Daffodil Season, Week 2 April 8, 1999

Well, this week the forsythia opened, and the Bradford pear tree. And the bluebells, *Mertensia virginica*, are beginning to open, too. We've had warm weather, but we've also had a lot of wind, and that combination is definitely not good for daffodils. The daffodils wilt almost as soon as they open. I wander through the garden several times a day, to see if anything looks good enough to cut for the weekend show. There are a few things "resting" in my cool basement, so we'll see what the judges think on Saturday.



One thing I discovered on my garden walk was a daffodil with striped foliage. This is a sure sign of disease—yellow stripe. There are no daffodils with variegated foliage, so if you find any with vertical striping, dig them and discard them. There is no cure; and the virus can be spread by aphids or simply by using the same knife to cut blooms from different plants in the garden. Eventually the plants will become so weak they fail to grow.

'Geometrics' in white and yellow is looking good this week. Its blooms are so precise that it was given the nickname "Cookie Cutter" before it was registered with a real name. 'Hot Gossip' growing nearby in yellow and orange makes a nice contrast.

'Little Witch' was sent to me as an unacceptable substitute for *N. cyclamineus* several years ago, but it does look nice along side a rocky area. 'The Alliance' is also a cyclamineus hybrid, and is good for both show and garden.

'Agathon' (pictured) is an old variety which is exceptional in the garden. It lasts and lasts, and withstands severe cold snaps better than most. 'Cocktail' is another older variety, this time in lemon yellow. 'Happy Hour' is a jonquil hybrid in yellow and orange. Like most jonquil hybrids, it has the added bonus of fragrance.



I think my favorite daffodils are the pink and white ones, and this week's favorite is 'Raspberry Rose'. It has good, deep pink coloring that holds up well in full sun. You can't ask for more than that in a daffodil.