

Large Cupped Daffodils

February, 2000

So, last month I talked a little about the classification of daffodils, and you may have wondered why you should be interested. What good is it to you, anyway? Aside from entering shows, it tells you a little about what the flower looks like.

Division 2, Large Cupped Daffodils, makes up the largest group of daffodils. There are over 7,000 names listed in The American Daffodil Society's Data Bank. Large cupped daffodils have a cup or trumpet or corona that is more than 1/3 but less than equal the length of the perianth or petals. The cup may be flat, laying back almost against the petals, or long and cylindrical, or shaped almost like that in the typical trumpet daffodil. And this division has the most colors and color combinations. The original daffodils in this division were mostly hybrids between *N. pseudonarcissus* and *N. poeticus* and their subspecies and varieties. *N. pseudonarcissus* is shades of yellow, or yellow and white; and *N. poeticus* has white petals with a cup that may be all red/orange, or it may have a cup with a deep green eye, with yellow in the cup, and a deep reddish/purple rim. So the mixture of these colors have given us the range of colors in modern daffodils. New hybrids these days come from crossing various older hybrids, but most could trace their ancestry back to one of the two species mentioned. The pink coloring in any daffodil can be traced back to *N. poeticus* and its relatives.

Most daffodils in Division 2 bloom in approximately midseason. This makes sense when you consider that *N. pseudonarcissus* blooms relatively early and *N. poeticus* blooms in late season.



If you're looking for a yellow daffodil to plant by the hundreds, 'Carlton' would be a fine choice. It is a sturdy daffodil, and would make a fine swathe of yellow in the spring. 'Camelot' is another fine, sturdy yellow daffodil, and if you're interested in doing some hybridizing it has proven to be a good parent. 'Coromandel' has a very long, straight cup, and must surely miss being trumpet proportions by mere millimeters. 'Golden Aura' is just a bit smaller than some, but it has precise form. It's easy to cut a bouquet of perfect blooms. 'Arleston' (pictured) is still new and expensive, but has classic form that will please the exhibitor. 'Nynja', raised in Tasmania, is another with that classic form. Those mentioned are yellow to deep gold, but there are also pale lemon colored flowers. The newish 'Cool Shades' is excellent.

If you like cool shades, then the "reverse bicolors" would probably appeal to you. These are flowers with yellow petals and a white or whitish cup. Most all have pale petals. 'Altun Ha' is arguably the premier flower in its class these days. 'Daydream', though older, is still an outstanding flower. 'Binkie' was probably the first of this type to reach a wide audience, and still makes a fine display in the garden.

Yellow and orange or red flowers come into their own in this division. There are many from which to choose. The older 'Ceylon' has received the ADS Wister Award as an outstanding garden plant. 'Falstaff' (pictured) is another which makes a fine show in the garden. Newer, and relatively sun-resistant, is 'Furnace Creek'. There are even some which have orange, or orange flushed, petals. 'Creagh Dubh' is one.



For a long time, the only pink and white daffodils were in Division 2, but now hybridizers have developed some in other divisions. 'Mrs. R.O. Backhouse' was "that pink daffodil" for years, but now there are hundreds. My favorite daffodil may be 'Fragrant Rose' which has white petals with a lovely pink cup. Some people can detect a rose fragrance. Another favorite of mine is 'Notre Dame' (pictured). In this one, the pink is confined to the rim of the cup, and it blooms late in the season.

There are also lots of white and orange or red daffodils. These usually benefit from being planted in a semi-shady location. Some even have orange cups with a narrow yellow rim. 'Glengormley' is an older example; 'Irish Rover' is another.

I also like white daffodils. If you want a showy display of lots of whitish daffodils, then 'Ice Follies' may be what you're looking for. It has a rather flat cup which opens yellow and eventually fades to white. It's another ADS Wister award winner. One of my favorites for exhibition is 'Silk Cut' (pictured). It opens with perfectly flat petals, as does another of my favorites, 'River Queen'.



You can have quite a nice daffodil garden, just by using daffodils from division 2.