

What's New in Daffodils?

July, 2000

By now, you've probably received a number of daffodil catalogs. If you're planning to order any bulbs, you should get your order in without delay. Have you noticed that many of them have cultivars listed as "NEW!!!"? Well, what a lot of these catalogs are telling you is that a cultivar is new to their listing. If you're getting catalogs that list the prices of their "new" flowers as 10 for \$\$, or 25 or 50 for \$\$, then it's a very good bet that the flowers are not truly new. If you want the newest introductions, you should go directly to the breeders. Check the American Daffodil Society website at www.daffodilusa.org and go to their list of specialist growers. Write, or email where appropriate, for some catalogs. But be prepared for much higher prices. But remember, it takes a daffodil seed from five to seven years to grow to a blooming size bulb, and then another ten to fifteen years for the grower to have enough bulbs to sell. So the grower has fifteen to twenty years of work invested in that cultivar.

So, what IS new in daffodils? Trumpet daffodils are beginning to get the same colors as have been available in large cup daffodils for many years. A very few pink and white trumpet daffodils have been available in the past, and this year two new ones, 'Hornpipe' and 'Korora Bay' are available from Brian Duncan Daffodils. Yellow and orange trumpet daffodils have progressed from those with poor form to those which can hold their own on the show bench. Mitsch Daffodils offers 'Magic Lantern', Duncan Daffodils lists 'Nederburg', and Oakwood Daffodils is listing 'Uncle Bill'.

Breeders are working with split corona daffodils, giving more colors and better form than in the older ones. Oakwood Daffodils lists the white and pink 'Aunt Renee', the yellow-petalled with white cup 'Split Decision', and the yellow-pink 'Pretty Woman'. Duncan Daffodils has two white and pink split cups which have been winning prizes in the U.K.—'Drama Queen' and 'Lady Eve'. R.A. Scamp lists 'Bosvale' in white and pink and 'Jantje' in yellow and orange. Jackson Daffodils in Tasmania lists 'Prodigious', an all yellow flower. Mitsch Daffodils, continuing their listing of fine split corona daffodils, lists 'Natural Beauty' in white and pink. Split corona daffodils have come a long way since the days when they were referred to as monstrosities in U.K. shows!

Perhaps due to the trend in smaller gardens, or perhaps because shows now have classes for intermediate-sized daffodils, breeders are now beginning to offer these smaller jewels. These smaller flowers, too small to compete in standard classes and too big to compete with miniature flowers, were often discarded by the growers, but now they are finding a ready market. Mitsch Daffodils lists 'Emerald Light' which has white petals, a deep green eye with a tiny rim of orange. Hofflands Daffodils lists 'Pretty Baby' which is similarly colored. Brian Duncan daffodils offers 'Fairly Magic' which is white with a small

pink rim on the cup, while Jackson's Daffodils offers a yellow trumpet daffodil, 'Little Tyke'.

Truly new types of daffodils are few and far between, but with the advent of the fertile jonquil hybrid 'Hillstar' from Mitsch Daffodils, new forms of jonquil hybrids will soon grace our gardens. 'Fertile Crescent' and 'Fertile Plains' are two new ones from Mitsch this year, joining 'Acceleration' and 'Perpetuation' from a few years ago.

The yellow and pink daffodils which began to appear some dozen years ago or so, now have enough depth of color that holds up in the garden. One of the best is 'American Dream', introduced in 1999. 'Oregon Pioneer', introduced in 1995, is another; both of these are from Mitsch Daffodils.

The only new miniature I could find for 2000 was 'Oakwood Sprite' from Oakwood Daffodils. This is a miniature trumpet daffodil bred from 'Tiny Tot' x 'Divine'. Strangely, Glenbrook Bulb Farm from Tasmania, which has the most extensive list of miniature daffodils, had no new ones for this year.

And oh yes, there are two new daffodils with millennium in their names: the white and pink 'Millennium Sunrise' and the yellow and orange 'Millennium Sunset'. Both of these are from R.A. Scamp.

So, why not splurge and order one of these truly new daffodils for the new millennium. Show your friends what's new in daffodils.