

## Daffodils for the Holidays

December, 2000

By now in most areas of the country, daffodils are planted and labeled. And I hope you've made at least a rudimentary map of your planting, as small children and animals sometimes move labels around. You want to know what the flowers are when they bloom next spring, in case you want to enter a show, or in case visitors to your garden exclaim, "What lovely flowers!" and want to know the names so they, too, can get bulbs like them.

But this is the time of year when the paperwhite daffodils hold center stage. They're easy to bring into bloom. Buy a few bulbs, and place them in a bowl filled with pebbles. But don't use pebbles from the ocean's shore without giving them a good scrubbing first. A friend found that the salt on the pebbles was death to the bulbs! Fill the bowl with water just to the base of the bulbs. In a few days, they will have sprouted roots. Be sure to keep the water level just below the bulbs. The bulbs will grow quickly, and you'll have to keep turning the pot so that the flower stems don't all lean in the same direction. It may be necessary to stake them. To avoid staking, you might consider getting a hurricane lamp-style glass chimney to put over the bulbs. This way, the foliage and bloom stems are contained within the glass. I saw this at a friend's, and it was very effective.



With a name like "paperwhite," (pictured) you'd think that all flowers of this type were white. But that's not the case at all. There are eight or nine different cultivars available in the trade. Some have all white flowers, like 'Galilee' and 'Ziva'; others like 'Bethlehem' ('Nony') and 'Israel' ('Omri') have pale yellow petals and yellow cups. 'Chinese Sacred Lily' has white petals with a yellow cup, while 'Constantinople', which is a sport of 'Chinese Sacred Lily', is a double flower in yellow and white. The lovely yellow and orange one called 'Soleil d'Or' (pictured below), or sometimes 'Grand Soleil d'Or', though not known to be related to the paperwhites, can be treated in the same manner. All of these flowers are scented,

some more strongly than others.

While these bulbs are not hardy in cold climates, after blooming they can be planted in the garden in areas which do not get frost/freezing weather in the winter.

You might still find some of these bulbs at your local garden store, but you can also find most of them online. One such site is at [www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com](http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com) Look for Narcissus under the heading "Items still available." Scroll down, or search, for the specific bulbs. An email from them in the last week indicated that all remaining items were 25% off. But remember, if you live



where the temperatures are wintery, the cold weather could damage the bulbs in shipping.

Any one of these bulbs would make a nice holiday gift. You could give the bulbs, nicely wrapped, or you could start the bulbs into growth and/or bloom and present them that way. A favorite teacher might enjoy them. They're perfect for children who can watch the roots, leaves, and bloom develop.

If it's too late to find bulbs, you can surely find pots of paperwhite bulbs in bloom. Add a pot or two in with your holiday poinsettias to add fragrance and a touch of white. Why not include some of these daffodils in your holiday decorations?