

## Anticipation March, 2001

Anticipation. As I write this at the end of February, I look forward to seeing the first daffodil of spring. In some parts of the country, blooms are already up, and before March is over, I'll surely have lots of daffodils in bloom. Yes, there have been a few blooms in the coldframe, but they don't really count. It's bloom outside that counts as the beginning of "The Season." In the meantime, I enjoy the snowdrops, winter aconites, and early crocus. And the hellebores have buds showing, so if it doesn't get really, really cold, they should look good in a couple of weeks.



First bloom in the open for me is always a miniature daffodil. And often it's a toss up between the little miniature yellow trumpets, 'Wee Bee', 'Bagatelle' (pictured), and 'Small Talk'. The first two listed are quite similar, but 'Small Talk' is distinctive, with its narrower petals. I find that 'Small Talk' is also the best grower of the three, increasing with abandon. These are followed closely by 'Lilliput' and some of my own little bi-color trumpet seedlings.

Some years 'Rijnveld's Early Sensation', a yellow trumpet daffodil, joins these earliest bloomers, but very often in my climate the buds get frozen. I friend in Tennessee has had them in bloom for several weeks already.

Another group which blooms early is Division 6, for cyclamineus hybrids. All yellow 'Coronet', orange and yellow 'Jetfire' and 'Emperor's Waltz', the yellows 'Swift Arrow', 'Warbler', and 'The Alliance' (pictured) brighten the early March days. While these are not miniature size, they are generally smaller than the trumpets that come a bit later.



The consistently earliest trumpet daffodil in my garden is the white and yellow 'Prologue'. It is certainly aptly named. 'Honeymoon', in pale yellow, follows right on its heels, to be followed quickly by all yellow 'Habit'. The smaller-flowered 'Sweetness', an all yellow jonquil hybrid, adds its beauty and perfume shortly thereafter.

Anticipation. It's also a time of anticipating the catalogs from the growers, to see what new introductions are in their offerings. Some of the catalogs have great color photos, so you can see what the daffodils actually look like. When I say

“growers,” I’m referring to the people who actually do the breeding of daffodils, not the general bulb catalogs. Those usually come later.

The “early list” from Mitsch Daffodils has arrived, with cultivars which will not be listed in the main catalog. On it I found ‘Blue Danube’, a white trumpet which I have been coveting for some years. It was listed several years ago on introduction, but has not been listed since. Mitsch Daffodils also list some Jackson-bred daffodils. Jackson Daffodils is in Australia, and so by getting them from Mitsch Daffodils, they are already acclimated to the Northern Hemisphere. The Mitsch catalog usually arrives in late March, and has lots of color photos.

The catalog from Jackson’s Daffodils has arrived, with photos of nine of their ten new introductions. There’s a new reverse bicolor large-cup, ‘Postulate’, that looks very nice. It has lemon yellow petals with a white halo at the base, and a cup of white rimmed with the same lemon yellow as the petals. It sounds very nice.

Ringhaddy Daffodils is a new entry into the world of specialist daffodil catalogs. They operate in association with Ballydorn Bulb Farm in Northern Ireland. There are no photos here, but lots of good sturdy daffodils that stand up in inclement weather and can hold their own on the show bench as well. You’ll find lots of good Irish names here, like ‘Ballynahinch’, ‘Lagan Valley’, and ‘Port Logan’. It’s like reading a map of Ireland.

Cherry Creek Daffodils, in Oregon, is a relatively new commercial venture. The proprietor has been raising daffodils on an amateur level for some years, and this year is listing some of his own seedlings for sale, along with the best of some other hybridizers, amateur as well as professional. The color cover shows ‘Brooke Ager’, an intermediate-sized daffodil in deep pink and white bred by Sid Dubose; and the newly named ‘Haiku’, a smallish poeticus hybrid from the late Murray Evans.

The catalog from Brian Duncan Daffodils has lots of photos. My favorite daffodil is probably ‘Fragrant Rose’ (pictured), and Mr. Duncan is the raiser. This is one that belongs in every garden. Almost every bloom can be cut to exhibit, and the bulb increases quickly to form a beautiful display in the garden. ‘Inner Glow’, one of the new introductions for last year, is bred from ‘Fragrant Rose’, and it’s said the white petals pick up a hint of pink as the flower ages.

If you’re anticipating spring, too, you can write for the catalogs at the addresses listed.



Mitsch Daffodils, P.O. Box 218, Hubbard, OR 97032

Jackson's Daffodils, P.O. Box 77, Geeveston, Tasmania 7116, Australia  
Ringhaddy Daffodils, Ringhaddy Road, Killinchy, Co. Down BT23 6TU, Northern  
Ireland, U.K.

Cherry Creek Daffodils, 21700 S.W. Chapman Road, Sherwood, OR 97140-8608  
Brian Duncan Daffodils, 15 Ballynahatty Road, Omagh, Co. Tyrone BT78 1PN,  
Northern Ireland, U.K.