

What do you do about daffodils in June?

June, 2001

When gardeners think of June, they tend to think of roses. The early blooms of daffodils are forgotten in the wonderful array of colors and scents from the roses. If only we could get rid of that ugly daffodil foliage!

Daffodil foliage DOES begin to look untidy at this time. If you were planning to dig and divide your bulbs, now is a good time to do it, while the foliage is still there to show you where to dig. If you wait until the foliage is gone, you might accidentally cut into a bulb. You may be wondering why someone would want to dig his or her bulbs. After all, daffodils are long-lived perennials. But when they get crowded and fail to bloom, it's time to dig the bulbs. Or maybe the shrubs have grown so much that the daffodils are being smothered. They need a new place in the garden. Save the biggest bulbs and replant them in the fall. If you have lots of room, of course you can also plant the smaller bulbs, which may take a year or two to reach blooming size again. Conventional wisdom says to store them in a cool, dry place over the summer; but I just spread them out on my garage floor. The car spends the summer outdoors! I think the important thing is not to stack them up. Then need to dry off quickly.

If you weren't planning to dig, you probably want to get rid of the foliage. Of course, you haven't tied it or braided it, or done any of those other things which people who don't know better do. You know better. You know you can remove all the foliage when it begins to turn yellow, or a minimum of six weeks after blooming.



If you've taken any photos during your blooming season, you've probably gotten them back from the developer. I like to take photos of some of the individual blooms, but it's also nice to take photos that show the daffodils in the garden with other plants. That way you can see where you might want to add more bulbs for next spring. And you might want to enter some of those photos in the first World Daffodil Council Virtual Daffodil Show which is being hosted on The American Daffodil Society website, www.daffodilusa.org. There will be classes for daffodil portraits; daffodils in the landscape; daffodils in their natural, wild habitat; daffodils with pets/animals; and a class for a flower arrangement using daffodils. Rumor has it that entries will be accepted during June,

with the show being held during July. At this writing, details of where and when to send photos electronically are not finalized, but you can email Bob Spotts at rspotts@netvista.net to get details of photo size, rules, and a complete schedule. There will be two kinds of judging: one by the general public visiting the site, and the second by daffodil experts who will use the same criteria as when judging daffodils to judge the daffodil portraits. Sound like fun? Then get those photos scanned and be ready! You see, true daffodil enthusiasts CAN find a way to enjoy their daffodils in June! This photo was taken at the Missouri Botanic Garden.

The other thing true daffodil enthusiasts do in June, is get their orders off to the specialist daffodil growers for the bulbs which will be delivered in September. We've been to shows, and made long "want lists." So now we scan catalogs to see which cultivars on our "want list" fit into our budget! The "want lists" always have some that are not within our budget, but we'll look again next year. Prices come down as the supply increases.

Bulbs ordered from down under growers arrived in March. They were planted immediately in an area that receives some shade. Little green shoots are appearing now, and with a little luck, those bulbs will be sending up a bloom either in June or July. It may not be a typical bloom the first year, but still it's fun to have daffodils actually blooming in summer. These bulbs will then have a shortish growing season before the foliage dies down. They should be turned around to our hemisphere by next spring, when they may or may not bloom; but if the foliage is healthy, that bodes well for the following year.