

Random Thoughts . . . of lions, lambs, and . . . daffodils  
March, 2002

Well, March is coming in like a lion! So if the old proverb holds true, it will go out like a lamb. The cold weather suits me, though. I'd rather have the daffodils blooming in another month when The American Daffodil Society holds its convention here in the Cincinnati area from April 18-20. My garden will be on tour, and it would be nice if there were daffodils in bloom then!



While some people locally have reported daffodil blooms in the open ground, I have very few as yet. 'Spider,' a miniature cyclamineus hybrid, is just opening, as are some seedlings sent to me by a friend in Indiana. These (pictured) are from a cross of 'Wee Bee' x *N. cyclamineus*, and they make a brave show in the cold weather. The cold hasn't seemed to bother them, but then they are close to the ground so there is less danger of the stems breaking when the frost bends the blooms down. The little bloom of *N. cyclamineus*, which was pictured with last month's article, is still in bloom, and in remarkably good condition. Now that's a sturdy little daffodil!

While you're waiting for your daffodils to bloom, you might think about making some crosses to make your own daffodils. You know, from seed. Yes, I know most people plant daffodil bulbs, but you can make your very own—nobody else would have one exactly like it unless you shared bulbs at some point—by pollinating some flowers. It's easy—spiders and bees do it for us sometimes. You just take the pollen from one flower and put it onto the stigma of another. If the cross "takes," you'll get seeds, and each seed will make a completely different flower from any other. My friend in Alabama says she just uses pollen from flowers she likes and puts them on other flowers she likes. She thought she might try for a split-corona, so she put pollen from a split-corona, 'Orangery', onto a large-cup daffodil, 'Scholar', and now she has a brand new split-corona daffodil which looks pretty darn good. And the bonus is that she knows it will grow in her climate, since it has been growing there for five years to get to blooming size. If you don't feel like spreading the pollen yourself, you can always collect the seeds from the blooms the spiders and bees have pollinated for you. You might be pleasantly surprised by the results in five years!

March also brings on daffodil show season around the country, beginning in Tallahassee, Florida, (yes, Florida) with an exhibit of about 40 different cultivars on display. Then the shows follow spring around the country, ending in Minnesota in mid-May. You can find a complete list of shows on The American Daffodil Society website, <http://www.daffodilusa.org/> Why not visit a show in your area, to see the wide range of cultivars which will grow in your locale. And take some blooms along to exhibit, too. The local organizers will be happy to have you, and will help you get your flowers entered. They might even share some bulbs with you.