

If it's March, it must be Showtime!

March, 2003

March marks the beginning of showtime in the United States, and perhaps most of the Northern Hemisphere as well. Beginning with the first show of the season on March 1-2 in Tallahassee, Florida, right through May 10-11 in Chanhassen, Minnesota, daffodils are the star attraction at horticultural shows around the country. A complete listing of American Daffodil Society-approved shows is posted on the Suite101 Gardening Community's calendar.

Why, you may ask, should I care about daffodil shows? Why would I even want to go to one? Well, it's the best way I know of to see what daffodils will grow well in your area. You'll probably be surprised at the great number of different cultivars on display. Local garden stores have a small number of cultivars available each fall, and most of these come from the Dutch mass market. There are lots of smaller suppliers who offer some wonderful cultivars, much different from what's available locally. You'll likely also meet some of the local folks who have exhibited their flowers, and they are always eager to tell you where they got their bulbs. They may even offer to share some with you. They may invite you to join their local daffodil society. This is not an expensive proposition, and most of them have bulb sales or exchanges which will more than pay for the cost of membership. And it's always nice to get together with others who share your interest in plants.

Of course, this is not only true of daffodils. For whatever plant you happen to be most interested in, there is probably a society devoted to that plant. This is a wonderful way to meet like-minded people locally, nationally, and internationally. I've met most of the modern-day daffodil breeders, something I could never have done had I not joined The American Daffodil Society and attended their conventions.

A convention, you say? Yes. The ADS convention is held annually in different locations around the country. This year, the convention will be held in Asheville, North Carolina, March 27-29, at the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort. There will be a show, of course, with special classes offered only at the National Show. The show is free and open to the public, so if you live nearby, do come see the show. There are fees for the other activities, which include speakers from around the world, sessions on various topics of interest to daffodil people, meals, and a tour of Biltmore House and Gardens as well as the North Carolina Arboretum. Our speakers this year are Nial Watson, a grower from Northern Ireland; Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs; Allen Lacy, noted garden writer; and Bill Pannill, well-known amateur daffodil hybridizer. Break out sessions will be held on Species Daffodils, Judging Collections, Hybridizing Miniatures, Public Plantings of Daffodils, and Digital Daffodils. Rounding out the morning, we'll have a presentation by a Biltmore horticulturist giving us an overview of the plantings

there. If you want more information about the convention, please email me at Daffmlg@aol.com

So, there you have it. Locate a daffodil show near you, attend the show, and check out all the different cultivars on display. Make a list of your favorites and ask one of the sponsors to tell you where you can buy bulbs. I'll be looking for you . . .