

The Bulbs are Planted; time to Rake Leaves November, 2003

By the time November rolls around, most of my bulb planting is done for the year. Yes, there are still a few bulbs to plant—gifts from friends, etc., but most are planted. But you can continue to plant daffodil bulbs right up until the ground freezes. You can still find bulbs at garden stores, marked down. And I see Brent and Becky's Bulbs still has bulbs available. <http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com> If you buy bulbs locally at this late date, be sure to give the bulbs a good squeeze to make sure they're still nice and firm. They haven't exactly been stored at optimum temperatures while in the bins in the garden stores. Do get the bulbs planted this fall. If your weather turns bad, plant them in pots and keep the pots in the garage. Don't try to keep the bulbs until next year to plant. They MAY live, but it will take them a couple years to "catch up" after drying out for a year.



'Bonica' roses are still hanging on.

November means raking leaves and cleaning up the garden. After the leaves are raked, I'll mulch newly-planted areas with fine pine bark. Pine straw also works well, but I prefer the shorter needles. There are still some California poppies blooming in the garden. These make a wonderful cover over the daffodils in sunny locations. I broadcast some seed several years ago, and now they self-sow and come up every year. Those blooming now are from seed from the earliest ones to bloom this summer. The last of the

I've had a daffodil bloom on a fall-blooming hybrid sent to me by friends. It's a cross between a tazetta and a fall-blooming species narcissus. It had five lovely, slightly fragrant, 1-1/4 inch blooms on the stem. It will have to spend the winter in my garage, as it won't survive the cold winters we get in Ohio. (pictured)



Before the week is out, I'll have a bloom on 'Fyno' in the open ground. This is a miniature white bulbocodium hybrid. It was planted in the open last winter and survived. I'm surprised to see the bud has split the sheath already. I'll probably put a large glass jar over the plants when it gets really cold, making a private little greenhouse for it.

This year I have too many pots to fit inside my four small coldframes. A couple years ago I bought two large styrofoam coolers which I needed for drinks for a crowd. So I'm going to put pots into the coolers—just stack them up—and keep the coolers in the garage over winter. I'm hoping the styrofoam will help insulate the pots. I'll water occasionally, or throw some snow onto the pots when I have to shovel the drive. I figure this will work until the bulbs begin to sprout, which some already have. So I may have to rearrange things a bit—put those that have sprouted into the coldframes, and things that won't sprout until next spring into the coolers. This is one of those times when necessity is the mother of invention.