

## That was Quick!! May, 2005

Well, that was quick wasn't it? Daffodil seasons come and go, with enthusiasts always looking for that "perfect" season. It's been so long since I've seen a "perfect" daffodil season that I can't remember what one looks like!



The vagaries of weather this year meant that almost all my daffodils opened in the space of ten days. Yes, there were a few that were earlier, and a few that still linger on now, but the vast majority opened between April 8 and April 20. After several days of 80° weather, we got strong winds, heavy rain, and finally, snow. But just wait until next year!

So what is there to do now? Well, we can be cheered by other flowers that are coming along to take our minds off the daffodils, and distract us from the foliage that has to remain for the next six weeks. There are still some blooms on the *Helleborus x orientalis* to add color to the garden, and the *Mertensia virginica* was an absolutely gorgeous sheet of blue. I may have bought one *Mertensia* plant, and several others came in a load of topsoil I got early on. I thought the bluebells would look good with pink and white daffodils. And they did. The trouble is, after a couple years, the bluebells took over! They are so happy here that they seed around everywhere. These days I ruthlessly dig the volunteers that come up in my "real" garden and throw the plants down the hillside, encouraging them to fill the woods with color. Hellebores, if happy, will also seed about, and now I have hundreds of seedlings to pull each year. I really should cut the bloom stalks before the seed disperses, but the faded blooms do add something to the garden. Try some of these plants to add color after the daffodils—but don't say I didn't warn you!





Dwarf bearded iris are also beginning to bloom, which takes the eye away from the daffodil foliage. And in shady areas, *Iris cristata*, in both blue and white, is becoming established. So far neither of these plants has become a nuisance plant. In another woodland garden, white violets are in full bloom, with a few Confederate violets mixed in. I like the white violets better than the purple ones, as the leaves are smaller and the blooms are held above the foliage.

Hostas are coming up, with their varied foliage colors. The redbuds and dogwoods are blooming. So there's lots to look at as I'm out weeding. Now if only I can keep the deer away from the hosta . . .