

## ARE YOU READY???

September, 2005

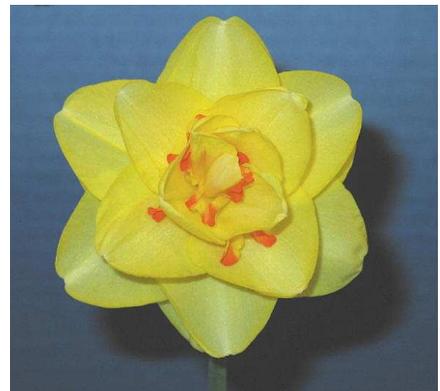
Labor Day seems to mark the official starting date for selling packaged bulbs in garden stores, home improvement stores, groceries, and other local outlets, at least in the U.S. If you're planning to buy bulbs, whether daffodils, tulips, or any of the other bulbs sold in the fall, make your selections early, even if you don't plant them until later. That way you'll get the best selection and the likelihood that someone has put back the wrong bulbs in the bin will be less. Never buy a soft bulb. When you get the bulbs home, spread them out so they get air. Don't let them piled on top of each other. I spread bulbs on my garage floor, both those I've dug in my own garden earlier, and those I might pick up locally.

If you're buying bulbs, be adventurous. Don't settle for the same old yellow daffodils. Not that there's anything wrong with yellow, but try some other colors and shapes. The American Daffodil Society has recognized good garden flowers with the Wister Award. These should do well in most areas of the United States.



For earliest bloom, you can't go wrong with 'Rapture'. It's a great choice for the front of the border. Its yellow flowers have swept back petals in the manner of a cyclamen, which is appropriate, since it's in Division 6 of the Horticultural Classification, Cyclamineus Hybrids. It is, in effect, a larger version of the petite species, *N. cyclamineus*. It's the only flower that has won both the Wister Award for gardens and the Pannill Award for exhibition.

Do you like double flowers? Then by all means try 'Tahiti'. This is a wonderful big, bold yellow and orange double daffodil. The strong stems hold the flower up well even in bad weather.



For blooms later in the season, you can't go wrong with 'Intrigue', a jonquil hybrid with yellow petals and a white cup, and several blooms per stem. I've heard its raiser, Bill Pannill, say it's the flower he's most proud of.



Another late-blooming flower is 'Stratosphere', which is also a jonquil hybrid. While officially a yellow and orange flower, in some climates the orange cup is more of a deep gold. It blooms on very tall stems, so put this one further back in the border.

Some other Wister winners, some of which should be available locally,

include the white and pink 'Accent', white and yellow 'Ice Follies', the all yellow jonquil hybrid 'Sweetness', red and orange 'Ceylon', and 'Salome' (pictured) with white petals and a pink cup edged yellow. 'Peeping Tom' is another early yellow cyclamineus hybrid; while little yellow 'Tripartite' with two or three split cups flowers on the stem comes at the end of the season. You can read about 'Fragrant Rose' in my July article.



Some of these bulbs will be available locally, and most are available from Brent and Becky's Bulbs at <http://www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com>. If you're going to order, do it soon before they're sold out.

Thanks to my friend, Tom Stettner, for the use of his photos.