

# florida daffodil society news

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## Nat Williams Daffodil Garden

On Sunday, February 23, the dedication of the Nat Williams Daffodil Garden in Thomasville, Georgia was held. Lots of members from Tallahassee drove up for the ceremony. President Frasier Bingham opened the proceedings with a brief listing of Nat's pioneering contributions to daffodil culture in this area. John Van Beck described Nat's significant assistance to the Florida Daffodil Society. Frasier then presented the garden to the City of Thomasville on behalf of the Society and the Mayor graciously accepted.

We were all honored that Ms. Jaydee Ager, President of the American Daffodil Society, came for the ceremony. Jaydee encouraged those attending to join the national organization. Folks really enjoyed getting to meet her after the ceremony when punch and bake goodies were served.

Setting the date for the dedication was a bit of a trial. Member Harriet Hawkins had the garden under constant surveillance. We were certain we knew when the daffodils would bloom, but you know how it goes sometimes. The day before the dedication Harriet and Betty Jinright went to John's garden picked two large buckets full of daffs, took the back to the park and stuck them in water filled test tubes that had been stuck in the ground in the middle of the bulb foliage. They looked just great. Believe it or not, no one noticed the deception until it was announced after the ceremony!!

## Surprise Visit

Mary Lou Gripshover, retiring Executive Director of the American Daffodil Society, paid a surprise visit to John and Linda Van Beck last March. Mary Lou toured the garden and looked at the daffodils. She and Linda spent a lot of time discussing flower photography and the possibility of the Van Becks contributing photos to the ADS Computer Data Bank program on CD Rom. John

was really excited about the possibility of Mary Lou helping to identify some of the daffodils grown by

Nat Williams. Unfortunately, she did not recognize them. Oh, well — a great visit anyway.

## *Narcissus jonquilla* - One of the best for North Florida, by Frasier Bingham, Ph.D.

*N. jonquilla*, a small, early, fragrant and bright yellow daffodil should and could be common in North Florida and South Georgia gardens. It divides well and sets seeds easily. In old plantings, it ends up everywhere, with as many blooms in the lawn as in the beds. If you wish to have seeds it is always wise to spread a little pollen yourself rather than rely totally on insect pollinators

Because the plant and flowers are small, I suggest using 10 or 12 bulbs within a six inch circle and selecting a protected spot at the base of a pine tree or next to a fence. They can be planted along a driveway or in any other sunny spot, being quite heat tolerant.

The four year old *N. jonquilla* seedling in my garden will probably bloom next year. One of the seedlings has flattened foliage rather than the rounded foliage of this species. No doubt it is an "open-pollinated" hybrid between *N. jonquilla* and some other daffodil in the garden. I wonder what it will look like? (*Jonquilla* will be available at the bulb sale.)

## Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting on May 10, election of new officers was held. New officers are: President - Mary Ann Van Kleunan; First Vice President - Dorothy B. (Dot) Roberts; Second Vice President - John Van Beck; Secretary - Audrey Hayes; Treasurer - Jane Leonard Smith. Jody Taylor will serve as Publicity Chairman, and Clara Jane Smith as Bulb Sale Chairman.

Mary Adore Minardi, out-going treasurer, reported that we were indeed solvent. Our accounts are at the SCORE Federal Credit Union, which gives us service free of charge. We have \$5.10 in our share account and \$2,539.59 in our checking account. This will allow us to purchase bulbs for our bulb sale with FDS funds, so we no longer have to rely on private underwriting support. This is certainly good news!

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## MIXED NEWS

A supplier of daffodil bulbs for last year's sale has made good on bulbs which were in poor shape, or which did not bloom. If you received Gigantic Star bulbs that went bad, let us know at the next sale and we will replace them at no charge or give you a credit.

To our knowledge, none of the Hillstar sold have bloomed and only 5 to 10% of the Barrett Browning bloomed. These bulbs may have been overheated in transit to the distributor and the flower bud inside was killed for this year. **They should bloom well next spring.** We will give you a credit if you request it. Both Hillstar and Barrett Browning planted in previous years bloomed quite well.

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## BAD NEWS

A dreadful pest appeared in North Florida and South Georgia in 1996. It permanently wiped out or severely damaged a number of amaryllis plantings. It re-appeared this year and got into spider lilies and daffodils as well. Our recent extra-warm winters may have contributed to its spread.

The moth, *Xanthopastis timais* Cram, is hard to find. It is black with an irregular pink blotch on each front wing. The beautiful caterpillar is velvety black with white stripes going around its body. It is not hard to spot when it gets a little size to it. Usually caterpillars are found on the upper surface of the leaves, but a few may be on the underside. As they get bigger, they eat the leaf down to ground level and then down into the bulb itself which they eat with gusto!

They are easy to get rid of by hand picking. Any control method will always miss a few the first time around, so keep checking. There may be a second hatching, so keep an eye out for the remainder of the season.

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## BULB SALE - October 25

Mark your calendar! This year's sale will be held at the home of Clara Jane Smith. The selection committee for the bulb sale has come up with 25 *great selections*. Emphasis will be on early bloomers and miniatures.

We are fortunate to be able to get one lovely antique bulb that is available only once every six years at a reasonable price, and two wild hybrids which are not available commercially at any price, but come from private gardens.

Thanks to Jack & Mary Ann Van Kleunan, Jovel Smith, John Van Beck and Michelle Harrell.

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## TEST GARDEN

The test garden at Goodwood is being relocated up the hill in the area next to the tennis court. In digging the bulbs it looks like there are two cultivars that have bloomed heavily and have multiplied exceptionally well.

The first is an early blooming cyclamineus called Itzem. It has very reflexed yellow petals and a red cup. The flowers are not large, but they are quite striking. Most bulbs in this division are subject to basal rot. Hopefully we have found one that is not.

We would like to have some members plant Itzem to test it further. We will make 1 bulb available to each of the first five members who request it. Call Mary Ann Van Kleunan at 997-3986.

The other second year, great looking bulb is Brackenhurst. It is an early, good sized, large-cupped flower with yellow petals and an orange cup.

A third good looking cultivar is Abba. It is a white and yellow double with 5 to 8 florets per stem. Its parent, Cragford, blooms quite well here. This has been in the test garden only one year, but when I dug my own bulbs to move them, they were really big and healthy. Most of them had shown signs of significant increase (more noses) as well.

