



# florida daffodil society news

ISSUE NO. 46

January 2004

## IT'S TAZETTA TIME

What a wonderful fall/winter for tazettas. If you had put your hand under the mulch the ground felt wet and cold even when temps were in the 70's. Paper Whites are holding on and all seem to be blooming at once. A lacing of wood ashes and additional mulching has helped keep the bulbs happy. Even Soleil d'Or 8y-o is starting up. Of course, Melanie Darst's bloomed at Christmas, as usual!

## DISCOVERIES AT WORK

Melanie Darst was put to work last week in Monticello. A Paper White, matching one found at Goodwood last year, was blooming in the backyard of the Christian Bliss house c. 1855. Melanie did a full botanical description. This is an unusual, all white tazetta, as both the star-shaped petals and very small cup are white when the petal unfolds.

Jean Brenner, Monticello Garden Club member, rescued bulbs last year for the FDS. She will protect and later move the new PW to the Wyrick Simmons House where she is developing a daffodil bed.

## "NAT WILLIAMS"

Melanie also confirmed the sighting of 2 clumps of "Nat Williams" in a vacant lot. The bulbs has survived the ubiquitous lawn mower by growing against the tree trunks. Down in Madison, Yvonne Smith's old garden also had "Nat Williams" blooming. These Florida locations are important as prior to these finds the bulbs had only been found in south Georgia (Quitman and Argyle).

## "N. ITALICUS"

Be on the lookout for this star-shaped petalled / yellow cup flower as it is blooming

well in many vacant lots in town. In the Van Beck garden, the plot of *N. italicus* that bloomed so well last year is limping along while small clumps have been in full bloom. The florets push out of the scape all at once. Other tazettas seem to "unfold" over a longer period of time.

## THE BRADFORD COBB

You may remember that last year a "new" tazetta was found at the Bradford Cobb House on Calhoun Street. The flower looked so perfect (petals the same size and slightly imbricate (overlapping) that the prevailing diagnosis was garden cultivar. It isn't!

You may also remember we were going to register this bulb but didn't have enough measurements to do the paperwork.

Bill Welch, noted tazetta authority, was doing a "tazetta review" of the Van Beck book and had suggested a certain bulb might be *N. tazetta* subspecies *ochroleucus*. His description did not fit, but did fit the Bradford Cobb tazetta. FDS member Marylou Gripshover had grown *ochroleucus* in California from bulbs she got from Sid DuBose. Sid had found these bulbs at his family home in Louisiana. He researched 1800's botanical texts, identified his bulbs and shared them with ADS.

Meanwhile, Linda Van Beck found by chance a photograph of *ochroleucus* in an HP Books titled Bulbs, How to Select, Grow and Enjoy. The match up was perfect. Checking John Blanchard's Narcissus: A Guide to Wild Daffodils produced a short botanical description. In less than a week the riddle was solved -- but don't you wish the name was easier to spell and pronounce!

## SENSATIONAL EARLY BIRD

On January 16 the first non-tazetta opened. Reinveld's Early Sensation 1-y-y is just that. Although short in stature, the medium size trumpet is always a welcome sight. In a well

drained location, poor soil and planted deep, this daffodil is holding on. Introduced by Jack Van Klunen many years ago, these bulbs have always been considered marginal for Zone 8b and were only sold once by FDS. Available in catalogues, it will, like all Dutch grown bulbs, take 2 seasons to acclimate.

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## THE VAN BECK BOOK

We have a new title: Daffodils in Florida: A Field Guide to the Coastal South. The first chapters are in the hands of Denise Choppin and we are off and running – but don't expect to see the end result for several months. After designing and formatting the book, Denise will send it to Hong Kong where it will be printed. The book takes a cruise and makes landfall in Clearwater, FL – hopefully before the fall daffodil season.

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## TALLAHASSEE MAGAZINE

The FDS annual flower show is listed in the January-February issue of Tallahassee Magazine, but just wait until the next issue! We're not sure how the article will turn out, but we hope it will feature the flower show, FDS and our tazetta heritage -- and not solely on the fact that Linda Van Beck is a little "daffy" and enjoys riding around finding daffodils. However, one has no control over a magazine article! If the magazine is not delivered free to your doorstep it can be purchased at Border's Bookstore.

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## TEST GARDENS

Thank you for the offers of garden space. As bulbs bloom, results will be published in the newsletter. A goodly number of bulbs were purchased, so the trials will cover a lot of different growing conditions throughout Florida.

Last year the FDS swapped bulbs with California grower Nancy Wilson, thus obtaining rare, short Paper Whites. Panizzianus 13w-w promptly bloomed – a true miniature PW. This year the other variety Canariensis 13w-w is blooming. Both bulbs have glaucous green foliage characteristic of Paper Whites, but Canariensis does not look like the usual PW. Medium size petals are star shaped. The bulb is native to the Canary Islands and holds promise of being a good addition to the garden.

A few years ago, Bill Welch sent a batch of tazettas, including the "Australian Paper White." A huge bulb, 9 noses the first year and many stems made a great display. This year there were 5 noses, 1 stem of a poor small bunch of florets. All in all it is not much of a show and if you know anyone in Australia, we could "return" the bulb to its homeland.

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## POTTED DAF

FDS President Bob Denk and his wife Jean recently moved to Westminster Oaks. Some of their daffodils were "rescued" and placed in Linda Williams alkaline soil. Bob had planted "Hugh Town" 8y-o in a large pot. He protected the pot from freezing, so the bulbs spent time in the warm garage. The bulbs were accidentally "forced" and came into full bloom in early January. In the Van Beck test garden, the leaves are barely up. We were impressed by the large florets and the great fragrance. One can see why the bulb has been introduced into commerce in the U.K. (Ron Scamp -- QUALITY DAFFODILS).

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## SUCCESS IS IN THE AIR (ALONG WITH THE FRAGRANCE FROM PAPER WHITES)

With a big sale in Panama City and good sales to FDS members we handled nearly 9,500 bulbs, and made a small profit that will cover future expenses of FDS test gardens, demonstration beds and public plantings. The careful buying (bulk discounts, free delivery) all helped. Native Nurseries and Tallahassee Nurseries donated bulbs to the Leon County Extension daffodil bed.

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## AND COMING UP

There will be a bulb show at Tallahassee Nurseries March 6 & 7, 2004, 10 AM to 5 PM. If you'd like to help with the show, call Lennie Kennedy at 878-3787 – before she calls you!

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## Division 8 – Tazetta

There are many pungent flowers per stem. The fragrance of these is musky sweet. They are excellent perennializers that perform well in southern areas, zones 5-9.