



florida daffodil society news

ISSUE NO. 56

APRIL 2006

ODDS AND ENDS

Publisher Linda Van Beck and editor Phyllis Graham hope to add a page to the newsletter for future issues in order to include articles from other sources of daffodil information and offer better coverage of different gardening zones.

As promised, members who had not paid their dues were dropped, temporarily reducing our membership from 300 to 200 (families count as 1). Now we are back up to 254 and growing! The recent membership additions include 30 new, 5 rejoined and 4 renewals. Next June 1, the beginning of our fiscal year, we will start counting families as 2 members.

The bulb committee will be meeting in a couple of weeks. If you have any druthers or want to join the committee, leave a message with Chairman Clara Jane Smith (850-385-3324).

After all these years, there is a change in Tallahassee's front yard gardens, brought on by professional garden landscapers and the fact that more people are growing dafs. We can hope that this phenomenon will continue to grow and spread to other cities. The new ten-county Florida Master Gardner project in Central Florida will receive the second shipment of bulbs this year. FDS will contact more Florida county agents this summer. The goal is to reach the Lakeland area.

Last year the FDS offered 2 new cultivars. I am sure everyone was pleased with Brachenhurst 2Y-O, but we hope it will bloom earlier after this "acclimation" year. As it is difficult to buy Ceylon 2Y-O, we are lucky to have its modern (1977) English cousin. Bittern 12Y-O – what a big surprise. With no photo to go by, one was waiting for yellow petals, but they all turned white! And the orange cup was a very sturdy yellow. We sold 100, so if any of you who bought the bulbs had a different experience, please let Linda know.

The daffodil season is winding down – both blooms and programs. Linda Van Beck will give one more FDS program in Steinhatchee (garden circle) and end with a big finale in Baton Rouge giving 2 talks, one on early historic, to the Master Gardeners of Louisiana.

WEATHER

Every year there is a variation in the Bell curve of our weather. Variations can be positive for some varieties and negative for others. The first step is to check out the weatherman's prediction as to an El Nino, La Nina or neutral year. 2006, an official La Nina year, finally got its act together and gave us 2 weeks of uniform, nasty, early January weather (approximately 28° -- 55° F). As a result, many white daffodils that hadn't appeared in 4 years bloomed – small perfect trumpets, a "Beersheba"-like large trumpet, "February Silver" all bloomed early, "Mrs. R.O. Backhouse" 2W-P, "Mount Hood" 1Y-Y bloomed midseason and many "White Lion" 4W-W are now roaring. Daffodils, on the whole, appeared vigorous. St. Patrick's Day 2Y-Y was outstanding. An early blooming batch protected by the house looked normal. The batch up the hill started on St. Patrick's Day, bloomed for weeks, and the cups looked like trumpets.

Usually La Nina also means lack of rain, wind, excess sun and no crashing freezes. The recurring heat waves seemed typical of Central Florida, although there the temperature reached over 84°. We think when the air temperature reaches 84°, the buds cook.

In a La Nina year, one must water until the end of March. The stem will not be taking up water, but if the leaves are not in good condition optimal photo synthesis will not occur and bulb performance will be

diminished. Basically, what this means is that you will make humidity by throwing water up in the air and letting it fall. Doesn't take long to do, but your dafs will be happier and hopefully the buds won't blast.

During the Florida Chautaugua weekend in De Funiak Springs, rain poured down. Only 20 folks attended the FDS lecture, but many saw our booth, stopped to smell the flowers and took home literature.

At home, the heat rose to 84° and blasted a batch of Butter and Eggs. The limbed-up pine tree offered no shade. A few feet away, the dense shade of a Taiwan cherry tree not only cooled the buds but the doubles lasted for weeks when they bloomed. Another heat stroke victim was Telemonius Plenus. It just stalled.

At a mid-March program for the Iris Garden Club of Wakulla County in Crawfordville, one member reported an orange/yellow double, purchased at Esposito's, bloomed after a 2 year hiatus. It was probably Tahiti, which didn't rot in all that dry sweet sand and had responded to the "cold bump". FDS has sold Tahiti, so if anyone else has a bloomer, please holler.

DAFFODIL SHOW

All FDS members should be proud of our successful Annual Daffodil Show. We were the talk of the town with all our newspaper publicity and the TV spots before and after the academy awards program. One man declared he saw us on TV at 5:30 AM!

With the new entry into the area, increased interior space, a big white lattice panel and tons of daffodils, you knew you had come to a professional garden show. Visitors were greeted by a lovely arrangement of dafs, displayed in a cut glass vase that was a thank you gift from Jody Taylor and the Litchgate Foundation. Over 50 varieties of daffodils were tucked into greenery by Lori Johnson and her crew. This profusion contrasted with the pristine draped green sheets (gift of the Georgia Daffodil Society) that marked the "Small Daffodil Show". Judge Bonnie Campbell masterfully staged the dafs in their black holders, colorful ribbons and the black class stands into a pleasing display. Visitors looked and examined and oohed and aahed at the beautiful display. We had a grand total of 51 staged exhibits, but, disappointingly, only 10 people entered the judged

flower show and one of those was our Georgia member and judge, Jackie Turbidy. As an up-and-coming judge, Jackie needs to enter shows and win ribbons – she just can't judge her own flowers. We asked her to bring everything but the kitchen sink and she did. Probably would have brought that, too, if it were yellow.

The FDS gratefully acknowledges the following exhibitors: Tracey Allen, Tiffanie Bourassa, Lori Johnson, Dan Kimel, Marge Orrick, Susan Reed, Carol Schee, Mary Maude Sharpe, Jackie Turbidy and Linda Williams. And the top winners are....

Best Standard	Brentwood	8W-Y	Jackie Turbidy
Best Pre-1940	Grand Primo	8W-Y	Tiffanie Bourassa
Best Miniature	Tête-à-Tête	12Y-Y	Dan Kimel
Best Vase of 3 Standard	Nony	8W-Y	Jackie Turbidy
Best Vase of 3 Miniature	Tête-à-Tête	12Y-Y	Marge Orrick

The free daffodil for each visitor is still a big draw. And did we draw people on Saturday! It was a zoo! The colorful crowd included 18 ladies of the Red Hat Society. Sunday was relatively quiet, but a number of people enjoyed Carolyn Hawkins' floral demonstrations. Flowers were later given to the Tallahassee Garden Club (for their Monday workshop on studying and judging daffodils), Big Bend Hospice and Westminster Oaks.

The best part was everyone showing up at 4:30 on Sunday to take down the show and all the member support throughout this experience.

Thanks to all those who helped at the Show, but especially our clerks, Diana Culvert and Howard Rhodes, and Carol Allen, Tracy Allen, Weej Broderson, Bernice Ford, Lennie Kennedy, Emily and Pete Millett, Dianna Norwood, Marge Orrick, Mary Ann Tonnacliff and Sandra Whitehead. In addition, Phyllis Graham produced an excellent schedule and my neighbor, Rick Reed, cut shelf boards.