



ONE MILLION (AND ONE) DAFFODILS AND COUNTING! CITY TO MARK PLANTING OF 1,000,000 DAFFODILS ON NOV. 19TH



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Newport's Daffodillion is living up to its name. On Monday, Nov. 19, City leaders will join with organizers of the Newport Daffodil Project to officially plant Newport's 1 millionth daffodil bulb outside of City Hall.

Philanthropist Ronald Lee Fleming, the founding benefactor of the Newport Daffodil Project, is due to plant the organization's 999,999th daffodil bulb, while retiring Mayor Henry F. Winthrop will be on hand to plant the one millionth. But the blooms won't end there. In a nod to the future, a student from Thompson Middle School will plunge a trowel into the ground and plant the City's 1,000,001st bulb.

Launched in 2006 by a self-described “Daffy” group of civic leaders, the Newport Daffodil Project has been steadily seeding the City with bright yellow signs of Spring for over 10 years. Their efforts have brought Newport into a brilliantly bright bloom each April, ushering in the start of Spring and coinciding Newport Daffodil Days Festival.

For the City, planting Newport’s 1 millionth bulb marks the realization of a nearly 20-year long effort first initiated through its *Parks in Bloom* initiative, which aimed to plant Spring flowering bulbs across every City park.

This effort, led by Newport Tree Warden Scott Wheeler and his staff from the Department of Public Services would eventually morph, through the generous support of Mr. Fleming along with the work of hundreds of volunteers, into the Newport Daffodil Project. Within 15 years, an initial planting of 3,300 had grown to 180,000 daffodils.

However, for Wheeler and philanthropist Fleming, that wasn’t enough. Six years ago, they decided they wanted to up the ante, setting a wildly ambitious, rather “daffy” goal of one million – a Daffodillion, if you will.

So “Daffodillion” sprouted forth and over the next 5 years, the 180,000 quickly grew to 867,500 daffodils. In its sixth year, Daffodillion raised enough funds to purchase, donate and help plant another 200,000 bulbs this fall, handily surpassing the ultimate Daffodillion goal.

The over one million daffodils *have a value of over \$500,000* – “a gift to the street,” according to Fleming.

Newport Mayor Harry Winthrop praised the project as a model for how public-private partnerships can benefit the community.

“Having the opportunity to serve as Mayor has been one of the greatest privileges of my life, but it is the people and sense of community that made it truly an honor” he said. “The Newport Daffodil Project is emblematic of that experience. Newport has always been a beautiful City, but Daffodillion has made it bloom, and I’m thrilled to be planting the City’s 1 millionth bulb.”

The ceremonial planting is due to get underway at **10:30 a.m. on Monday, November 19th** with a reception to follow in the Second Floor Council Chamber at City Hall where organizers will be offering light refreshments and a million and one thanks.