

ADS SOUTHEAST REGION--WINTER NEWSLETTER, 2019

American Daffodil Society Officers

President: Nancy Tackett, California nancy@tackettblake.com
First Vice President: Fredrica Lawlor, Ohio Lawlor.f@pg.com
Second Vice President: Janet Hickman, Virginia hickmanderm@aol.com
Secretary: Kathleen Simpson, West Virginia mwgilzow@aol.com
Treasurer: Kathy Welsh, Oakton, Virginia Kathy.welsh@phmloans.com

The Executive Director: Frank Nyikos, Unionville, IN
ads_exec_dir@daffodilusa.org (Note there are underscores between ads exec dir). **Frank is contact for your membership dues**

SOUTHEAST REGION OFFICERS

(Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee east of Tennessee River)

Regional Vice President: (770) 855-4248
Carolyn Hawkins, Cumming, Georgia carolynrh99@gmail.com
Regional Directors
Lynn Ladd, Maryville, TN lladd1701@bellsouth.net
Molly Adams, Lookout Mountain, TN mewa@aol.com
Bonnie Campbell, Fayetteville, GA shade007@bellsouth.net

WELCOME TO ADS SOUTHEAST REGION NEW MEMBERS

David Jenson and Pat Espe, Johnson City, TN
Macrae and Kelly Linton, Nashville, TN
Jennifer Burtram Family, Christiana, TN
Karen Caldwell Family, Cumming, GA
Elizabeth Miller, Nashville, TN
Cecil Van Devender and Lauren Bardwell, Nashville, TN
Carolyn Berlepsch, Lewisburg, TN
Cheri Felton, Atlanta, GA

2019 SHOW INFORMATION

ROSWELL, GEORGIA: MARCH 9, Chattahoochee Nature Center. For more details contact Bonnie Campbell at email listed above.

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE: MARCH 16-17 in the Hollingsworth Auditorium, University of Tennessee. For more details contact Lynn Ladd at email listed above

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE: MARCH 23-24 at Cheekwood Botanical Garden. For more details contact Becky Fox Matthews at becky@lostfrogs.com

FERTILIZING DAFFODILS by Greg Freeman

It is interesting that I was asked to share my thoughts on fertilizing daffodils, given that Tom Stettner, Molly Adams and I discussed this subject back in the spring at the East Tennessee Daffodil Society's show in Maryville. Unbeknownst to Carolyn Hawkins, who asked me to write this piece, it is almost amusing that I should give fertilizing advice since I rarely use fertilizer on my daffodils. Nonetheless, it is a topic worth exploring, and I will do my best to offer some helpful tips – some do's and don'ts, mostly don'ts – if you will.

At the show, Molly was graciously assisting a local Master Gardener, who was inquiring about how and when to fertilize daffodils. Pausing in the middle of helping the enthusiastic novice exhibitor with her staging, Molly turned to Tom and then to me and asked what our thoughts were on fertilizing. Almost simultaneously, Tom and I replied that we pretty much don't fertilize.

What? How can this be, you ask? Well, let's review for a moment some of the essentials, if one is to successfully grow, enjoy and, yes, exhibit daffodils. Daffodils need sun, well-drained soil and reasonably good soil. However, as we have discovered in recent years, some cultivars (i.e. - 'Ice Follies', 'Dutch Masters'), as revealed in scientific study, tolerate a great deal of salinity, making them ideal for coastal gardens. We know some miniature species grow amid Alpine and Mediterranean conditions that would decimate that \$65 introduction you planted last fall. And yet the American South is dotted with old homesteads blanketed by historic cultivars and species that have thrived for a century or perhaps much more in long forgotten clay gardens, on rugged hillsides and in fields robbed of their nutrients by cotton planting carried out by generations of landed southern gentry and their slaves or sharecroppers. **The point is** that all daffodils are not created equal, and there might be a valuable takeaway regarding the resilience of daffodils, in general. That said, daffodils need not be planted and forgotten, but not for the reasons one might think, as I will later explain.

Some Do's

- Be selective about the strength of the fertilizer you buy. Since I don't typically apply fertilizer, it is best that I share the American Daffodil Society's recommendation as follows:
Top-dress with 5-10-10 when the leaf-tips emerge. As they flower, top-dress with 0-10-10 or 0-0-50. High-nitrogen fertilizer should be avoided.
- Do apply gypsum from time to time. During that conversation back in the spring, Tom Stettner and I both agreed that gypsum is a good additive. Gypsum, the primary product in plaster-of-Paris, helps remedy compacted soils. Per se, it is not a fertilizer, but it's good to use in southern gardens where clay is typically present. A couple of applications a year are good, and it is easily broadcast with a spreader.

Some Don'ts

- Don't get carried away with the compost! Plenty of rich, rotted, organic matter is great for some plants like *Convallaria majalis* (Lily of the Valley), but too much of it will spell a sure end to your daffodils. On the other hand, working some compost into your daffodil beds as you prepare them for planting is okay, even recommended. Remember, daffodils need drainage. I'd rather err on the side of too much sand, grit or clay than too much compost. So use with that in mind.
- Don't use those bagged soils that claim to retain moisture. Or, if you do, use them sparingly. I buy Miracle Gro® Moisture Control Potting Mix and combine it with cactus soil, perlite and occasionally my own garden's clay to grow daffodils in containers, but I would *never* plant daffodils in this stuff exclusively, potted or otherwise. The same rule can apply to any bagged soils that tout plant food ingredients as one of their selling points.
- Don't apply bone meal or bulb fertilizer directly into the hole you dig for each bulb. I don't care what the package says. It is best, if you insist on using these products, to work them into the soil. In other words, don't just dig a hole for the bulb, but dig a broader area and work the bulb fertilizer into the soil. Spade and trowel don't work quite as well as getting your hands dirty. Use your fingers to break apart any clumps of clay, and evenly work the fertilizer throughout the dug area, and do not over-apply. These products are described as "slow release," but like slow release medications, it's still possible to overdose or even burn the bottom of the bulb.

GREG'S GARDEN IN MARCH 2015



GREG'S GARDEN IN 2018



If you have any questions that you might need answered please contact me or one of the Regional Directors listed above for the Southeast Region. All emails are listed.

Carolyn Hawkins, ADS Regional Vice President