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Daffodils Are On The Horizon



Blooming daffodils turn Julian Town Hall into a wonderland. Photo Courtesy of Sally Snipes

Charlene Pulsonetti ~ Julian Journal • Thu, Feb 21, 2019

Along with apples, fresh mountain air and a rustic lifestyle, spring daffodils have been a popular attraction in Julian. And after months of cold winter weather, their appearance serves to brighten the lives of those who live here.

Now in its 15th year, the Annual Julian Daffodil Show attracts both locals and folks from down the hill who appreciate the distinctive flower and come to immerse themselves in one of the first signs of spring.

When attendees first walk into the show at Julian Town Hall, Sally Snipes says, "It takes their breath away."

In 1990, Snipes, a local resident, saw an opportunity to help beautify Town Hall's flowerbeds. Her father, whom she says helped "make life more beautiful" by planting and watering trees around Dana Point, had passed away that year. To memorialize him, she placed an article in a local publication asking for 10 individuals to buy a bushel of daffodils so she could plant them in the flowerbeds.

"The crazy thing that happened — and I know my dad is still smiling about this — is that \$6,000 came into my mailbox in the next month," she says.

With enough money to buy dozens of bushels, she sought friends, Girl Scouts and children from Julian Elementary School to help her. Teachers embraced the idea and allowed Snipes to lead groups of students to plant the bulbs around town.

Since the project's beginning, it has averaged 65 to 75 bushels every year. Local businesses and residents, all of whom benefit from the blooms, regularly purchase bulbs to show their support.

In 2004, after hearing so much about the daffodils in Julian, Jay Pengra of La Canada Flintridge encouraged Snipes to organize a show. Doing so, he said, would be an opportunity to educate the public about "what an amazing family the narcissus are."

The show has evolved throughout the years, initially starting with one table outside a local coffee shop, and eventually taking residence at the Julian Town Hall, where it returns each year.

Though Pengra passed away a few years back, Snipes remembers him for his humor, energy and love of daffodils, crediting him for the suggestion of offering a "bulb of the year" award.

Between 800 and 1,100 blooms are shown annually, brought in by local gardeners of all ages. Snipes reports that about 50 children enter every year, and, she says, "We give participation ribbons to every one of them to avoid tears. The main purpose is to encourage future growers."

The Julian Daffodil Show is set for March 23 and 24, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 2129 Main St. Entries of daffodils will be accepted Friday, March 22, from noon to 5 p.m.

"I encourage everyone to come, it is just such a big welcome to spring — and we all need that!" says Snipes. Art created by local students will be on display, and experts from the National Daffodil Society will be hand to answer questions.

There's no question that many have fallen in love with the festive flowers, which continue blooming year after year once they're planted.

"Many children nowadays don't get the opportunity to get their hands dirty," says Snipes.

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"The Earth needs more plant lovers. Maybe this is a way to encourage gardeners and future American Daffodil Society members."

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