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## Indiana Daffodil Society honors beautiful harbinger of spring at annual show



The Indiana Daffodil Society holds an annual spring show.

**Story and Photos by Jackie Sheckler Finch**  
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**T**homas Kinder wants to be a farmer when he grows up. At 8 years old, Thomas already has a head start on fulfilling that ambition.

“I just won a blue ribbon and a special award ribbon,” Thomas says, proudly pointing out his entries in the annual Indiana Daffodil Society show.

“Last year I won a blue ribbon, too,” Thomas says. He also is an approved vendor at the Bloomington Community Farmers’ Market where he will be selling cut peony flowers on May 18.

“My daffodils will be gone by then,” Thomas says. “I’m growing vegetables, too, and maybe I can sell them sometime.”

Thomas and his family — mother Julie Huff, father Dean Kinder and 5-year-old brother Owen Kinder — live on the five-generation Huff Family Farm in Deputy, near Madison, Indiana.



Thomas Kinder displays his prize-winning daffodils.

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### Natural Expressions

## Diamonds among the rough

**Story and photos by Bob Baird**  
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*“In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.”*

—Alfred Lord Tennyson

**N**othing quite compares with the exuberance of spring. In a college town, young men’s — and young women’s — fancies more than lightly turn to *amor*, partying, and who knows what. Semi-retired in my 70s, I remember what Little 500 weekend represented decades ago, and have resolved myself to the credence of the rites of spring in any culture, from Bacchus and Dionysus onward.

In my case, on a Friday night when festivities were just heating up, I stuffed in my ear-plugs, somehow focused enough to finalize my income taxes on the computer, then ran out, during the partiers’ dinner-hour to plant on the sunny edge of my Garden Hill lot a large spirea excised from a new client’s landscaping off Smith Road.

Frankly, I have trouble disposing of most any landscape plant, with the possible exception of burning bushes, privets and common elderberries that sprout up everywhere. Then after our Palm Sunday service, I cringed when a naturalist-friend confessed he had done away with an existing Peegee hydrangea in a bed I had designed and planted three years.

I had “worked with” the hydrangea, specifying a tallish, large-flowered hardy hibiscus



Daffodils, pulmonaria blooms and forsythia adorn a courtyard setting in the columnist’s garden.

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Patricia Walters explains the life cycle of a daffodil.



Emma Yu picks a bouquet of daffodils to take home.



Thomas Kinder takes a break to cuddle two English toy spaniels.

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Last autumn, Thomas says, he planted about 100 daffodil bulbs and is now seeing the beautiful rewards for his work. "Really my mom dug the holes and I put the bulbs in and covered them up with dirt. We have tons of deer but deer don't like to eat daffodils."

Held at the Hamilton Center in Columbus, the show featured hundreds of prize-winning daffodils and plenty of happy people.

"Daffodils are the first to bloom in the spring so we are always glad to see them," says Wu Xiao, watching as her daughter Emma Yu, 4, carefully chose a bouquet of flowers to take home.

Circling Emma's head was a daffodil garland she had created at the show's first-ever arts and crafts table, where visitors of all ages were invited to color pictures or make their own garlands.

"We want to increase our membership by getting younger people involved," says Sherry Holliday of Williams. "We want to educate people about flowers in general and daffodils in particular and doing crafts seems to be a good way to get children interested."



Daffodils are judged in many different categories.

Another popular attraction at the show was two English toy spaniels named Adeline and Alistair. Accompanying society member Lynn Courson to the event, the critters were enjoying the attention of visitors. In particular, they nuzzled up to young Thomas when he took a break from watering the many displayed daffodils to kneel on the floor and cuddle the two critters.

Established in 1956, the Indiana Daffodil Society has three meetings a year plus a picnic and spring daffodil show. Membership is \$10 a year for individuals or \$15 a year for family membership.

Membership includes opportunities to participate in club bulb/plant exchanges, a newsletter three times a year, diverse volunteer opportunities to promote daffodils and

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camaraderie with like-minded plant people.

For Frank Nyikos of Unionville, the show is a reminder of his childhood and the mother and grandmother who taught him about gardening. Now the owner of Walnut Grove Nursery, Frank says that children attending the show could well be learning something they will remember for the rest of their lives.

In a world filled with technology, children often can get bogged down with too many devices and not enough time enjoying Mother Nature, Lynn says. Planting a seed or a bulb and watching it grow can be fascinating. "Give them a dirt pile to play in," she says.

At the moment, 5-year-old Owen Kinder is busy scooping up dirt to fill around a yellow sailboat daffodil in a small container. When he gets home, Owen knows that it will be his responsibility to keep his plant watered until it is ready to be planted around Mother's Day.

"Then next year," Patricia Walters tells him, "you will have a daffodil blooming."

Patricia also explains the growing cycle of daffodils and reminds visitors to be sure and let the flower's foliage die down naturally. "Don't cut it too quickly," she says. "The greenery is what feeds the bulb so you will have healthy daffodils next year."

One of the most important activities for members of the Indiana Daffodil Society is identifying, marking, digging, curing and packaging daffodil bulbs for the society's annual bulb sale the last Saturday in August. Money raised is used to fund the society's scholarship program.

As charter life members of the Indiana Daffodil Society, Libby Frey and Helen Link both donated their individual bulb collections to the Indiana Daffodil Society, Sara Kinne says.

"Libby was so engaged in whatever she did and gave it 100 percent," Sara says.

In addition to the bulb collections which Helen Link and Libby Frey donated to the Indiana Daffodil Society, the group maintains six grow-out beds on Libby's property. Helen Link passed away in December 2002, Libby Frey in November 2013.

But their gardens continue to thrive. "The public is still able to enjoy what Libby started," Sara says. "It's a positive story about what happens to a garden after a person is gone."

For more information about the Indiana Daffodil Society, visit the website [www.indianadaffodilsociety.org](http://www.indianadaffodilsociety.org).



Sara Kinne helps a young visitor with his daffodil bouquet.



A variety of prize-winning daffodils can be enjoyed at the annual show.

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Owen Kinder prepares a daffodil to take home and plant.

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