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Making daffodils happen

By Fran Gonzalez | Oct 06, 2019



Elisabeth Wolfe in her garden planting daffodil bulbs Sept. 26. Her goal is to plant 1 million daffodil bulbs around the city over 10 years. *Photo by: Fran Gonzalez*

BELFAST — Elisabeth Wolfe loves daffodils. After driving through Florida on a spring trip last year and seeing so many beautiful flowers, she thought "God, that would look so good in Belfast."

Her goal is eventually to plant 1 million daffodils all around the city, with each year adding between 25,000 to 55,000 more bulbs. "Every year these will multiply," Wolfe said, and in 10 years, she hopes to reach her goal.

This is the second year of the Belfast Daffodil Project, with 50,000 bulbs planted last fall. This year she is receiving 26,000 bulbs to plant from Fedco Seeds.

"I tend to be a lone dog" when it comes to planting, Wolfe said, "but I've had a ton of help."

The city of Belfast and the Keep Belfast Beautiful movement have supported Wolfe, as has her husband's company, Worth Real Estate. "They have supported us financially" and also with time, she said.

The first year Wolfe estimated she spent \$13,000 on bulbs; this year it is closer to \$6,000. She raised the funds through contributions.

Wolfe is offering the bulbs this year at 25 cents a bulb to plant in personal gardens, or to add to planting parties across Belfast.

People also can buy bulbs and donate them to the city and a volunteer will plant them or purchasers can volunteer to plant themselves. Wolfe said she envisions many gardens sprouting up, all around town.

More people are always needed to help plant bulbs, organize planting parties and publicize the efforts. Last year the bulbs arrived later than expected, she said, and planting parties were a bit haphazard. Several big planting parties finally helped get bulbs in the ground last year, she said.

The Worksong Community Chorus planted about 3,000 bulbs in a couple of hours at the jughandle on Route 1. Troy Howard Middle School had 120 kids planting bulbs, as did Cornerspring Montessori School, and a special Mother's Garden area was planted with about 1,000 daffodils at Steamboat Landing.

Similar parties will take place this year, Wolfe said, with plantings anticipated on the east side of Armistice Footbridge, Walsh Field by Belfast Dog Park, Wales Park on Lincolnville Avenue and Main Street, and additional bulbs will be planted in Belfast City Park.

Head gardeners on several Belfast streets are currently trying to rally people to participate in the effort.

"I'm not good at asking," Wolfe said, "but everyone I have talked to has said yes. Last year we had varying degrees of success," she said, adding much depends on the weather and soil conditions. "Last year was really wet. Some came up sporadically."

Wolfe said there are many reasons to get involved with this initiative — one being community building and meeting new people, young and old, who are working together to beautify Belfast.

"I want to give back to our city," she said. "This is an incredible place to raise kids, or have a business. It's also good for your body, and good for the earth; it holds nutrients in the soil."

If people have ideas about where to plant in Belfast or would like to support the project, call Elisabeth Wolfe at 338-4783.

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