

My daffodils are finished blooming. What now?

Alma Gaul
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Daffodil foliage should not be removed until it has turned brown and died, which could be late June or early July, depending on the type of bulb, weather and other factors. That's because the foliage helps store up energy in the bulb for next year.

GARY L. KRAMBECK

Here are questions about what to do with daffodils after they are finished blooming, with answers from horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Q: When can I remove daffodil foliage?

A: Daffodil foliage should not be removed until it has turned brown and died, which could be late June or early July, depending on the type of bulb, weather and other factors.

The foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs is performing a vital function: manufacturing food for the bulbs. Premature removal of the plant foliage reduces plant vigor and bulb size, resulting in fewer flowers next spring. After the foliage has turned brown, it can be safely cut off at ground level and discarded.

Q: Should I tie or braid the daffodil leaves?

A: No. Although daffodil foliage tends to get floppy and look a little unkempt, it's best to leave the foliage alone and not tie or braid the leaves.

Daffodil foliage manufactures food for the plant to bloom next year. Tying the leaves together with rubber bands or braiding the foliage reduces the leaf area exposed to sunlight. As a result, the leaves manufacture smaller amounts of food.

Q: When can I move daffodil bulbs?

A: Daffodils can be dug up and replanted as soon as the foliage dies back (turns brown) in early summer. Daffodils can also be dug up and replanted in fall (October). If you would like to move daffodil bulbs in fall, mark the site when the foliage is present so the bulbs can be located in October. Daffodils perform best when planted in a well-drained soil in full sun.

To have additional horticulture questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or **hortline@iastate.edu**.

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