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Trend-setting daffodils for dardens and bouquets

BY MELINDA MYERS For the Telegraph Herald
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Delnashaugh is one of the most impressive double daffodils with its frilly petals, while early blooming Pink Pride has ruffled cups that start off apricot and gradually turn coral pink.

Courtesy Longfield-Gardens.com

Daffodils are having their day. Floral designers are opening our eyes to a world of gorgeous daffodils that extends far beyond the iconic yellow trumpets.

These unexpected varieties include doubles, bicolors and split cups, in colors such as creamy white, peach, pink, gold and orange.

Plant the bulbs in fall to see these beauties emerge in your spring garden. Then, enjoy how they elevate all your spring bouquets.

A benefit of planting some of these more unusual varieties is being able to stretch the daffodil season. Be sure to include some early bloomers such as miniature Tete a Tete. Another early bloomer is Barrett Browning.

This heirloom variety's orange-red cup has a yellow halo at the base, set off by bright white petals. Silver Smiles is a subtle beauty. A cluster of two or three little flowers tops each stem. Greenish-white petals surround a pale-yellow cup that fades to buff and then white.

Pink-cupped daffodils have been around for almost 100 years yet remain relatively unusual. Grow them in filtered sunlight to accentuate the color. Blushing Lady has yellow petals and a flared, salmon-pink cup.

Turn up the pink even more with Pink Pride. Another early-blooming variety, it features a ruffled cup that opens apricot and gradually turns coral pink.

As early daffodils begin to fade, midseason varieties take center stage. This is the time for split corona and double daffodils. Both types work well with the more traditional daffodils, while adding flair to gardens and arrangements.

Instead of a trumpet, the cup of a split corona daffodil is split into sections. These split cups might be ruffled or pleated and often lay flat against the outer petals. One of the showiest split cup daffodils is Cum Laude.

Its white petals frame a frilly, peachy-yellow cup with a green eye. Include other split-cup varieties such as Cassata, with a delicate ruffled yellow split cup and white petals, or Lemon Beauty with a star-like yellow cup set against white petals. Can't decide? Plant a split-cup assortment to find your favorites.

Close out the season with double daffodils. Their fluffy flowers resemble roses, and most varieties are fragrant. Delnashaugh (longfield-gardens.com) is one of the most impressive doubles. Its enormous, 4" flowers feature layers of frilly white and peach-pink petals. Tahiti is just as large, with soft yellow petals and red-orange ruffles.

Two of the latest bloomers also are two of the most fragrant: Cheerfulness and Yellow Cheerfulness. Each stem is topped with a mini bouquet of three or four little rose-like flowers, each the size of a cherry tomato. They are incredibly beautiful and extremely long-lasting.

In a vase, daffodils essentially can arrange themselves. The more flower forms and colors you include, the better. Have a little more time? Add a few stems of forsythia or curly willow and some other spring favorites such as bleeding heart, tulips and hyacinths.

The stems of freshly cut daffodils release a clear sap that can shorten the life of other flowers. Conditioning your daffodils is easy and eliminates this risk.

Cut the stems to the final length, and stand them in a clean container of cool water for four-six hours. After that, they can be combined with tulips and other blooms. Just remember to not recut the stems.

Nothing says spring like a yellow trumpet daffodil. But with so many other flower styles and colors to choose from, why not stretch your boundaries and discover some new favorites?

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