



## TOP STORY

# Mrs. Lee's Gardens: No daffodils for you



No Miss Lee's Daffodil Garden

By [Jamey Boyum](#) | March 16, 2021 at 12:21 PM CDT - Updated March 16 at 7:11 PM

SMITH COUNTY, Texas (KLTV) - It's been a blooming wonderful place to go for nearly four decades, but this year, sadly, there's no point in going. Mrs. Lee's Gardens in northern Smith County has so few blooms this year they didn't open to the public. We took a trip to the gardens to find out what happened to the daffodils.

Those who have never been there may wonder about the Lee Gardens sign on Highway 271 between Gladewater and FM 16, but those who have, well, they mostly want to go back, year after year. But this year, Dean of Daffodils Dennis Phelps has bad news.

"I can count hundreds if any, and they're just scattered around and they're dangling. Nothing to take a picture about," Phelps said.

He says there are supposed to be maybe a million daffodils along the dirt road on the 1000 acre property, but where have all the flowers gone?

"In the eight years that I've been there, this is the second time a freeze got us," Phelps said.

So they never showed up. The only pretty pictures available would be extreme close-ups, thanks to the snow.

“To get even close you’re still going to see dead stuff next to it unless you get right on top of the plant,” Phelps said.

Phelps had checked on the daffodils in mid-February in anticipation of opening Lee Gardens.

“The plants were there on the fourteenth, and that’s when the freeze hit. And when you go eight days below freezing, it stymies those flowers for that year,” Phelps said.

So this year it looks nothing like previous years around this time, but it’s nearly spring all over the northern hemisphere and:

“The weather can really play havoc. If it’s not freezing sometimes it’s raining and the roads get all messed up and people get stuck. So I shut her down to get the road in shape,” Phelps said.

And sometimes the blooms fade away while repairs take place. But the good news about the daffodils is that:

“They’re bulbs. They’ll come back,” Phelps said.

And so will the visitors, which has got to please Mrs. Lee. You know they’re all rooting for next year.

The daffodils have been on the property since 1954 when, the story goes, landowner Helen Lee ordered a box of daffodils and received a box car of the flowers. It has been open to the public every spring, weather permitting, since Lee died in 1984.

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