

ARROWCREEK VIEW™

THE OFFICIAL NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE ARROWCREEK® HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2019

VOLUME 14, ISSUE 2

Daffodils
ARROWCREEK JEWELS 20

Norm Reeder Recognition 12

Protecting ArrowCreek from Wildfire 26



Desert Daffodils

HIDDEN ARROWCREEK TREASURES

-BY SUSAN DUNCAN

My daffodils grow beautifully at about 5000 feet above sea level in ArrowCreek. When many Northern Nevada gardeners seek out perennials to plant in their high desert garden, rarely do daffodils come to mind. However, daffodils are drought resistant, a low fire hazard, low maintenance, and critter resistant; therefore, perfectly suitable and desirable for our residential landscape!

Daffodils deserve more attention as a spring element of a high desert garden because they are so carefree. Minimum water requirements are satisfied by the winter snows and spring rains. During the hot summer months, daffodils like to be dry; so they can tolerate drought conditions and do not need to be watered. They are dormant during late summer/fall fire season and any dried leaves would not contribute greatly to fuel a brush fire.

The hardest part of daffodil care is in the planting! The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) National Cooperative Soil Survey describes our soil as "extremely stony sandy loam," with 2 to 8 percent slopes. I would say so! Visit <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx> to find your soil information.

I do not need to buy any rocks to create stone borders or walkways. We have plenty right here on our own property. The soil naturally drains well. We have a mean annual of 300 days of sunshine, 8-12" of precipitation, 48-50 degrees F air temperature and a frost-free period of 90-110 days, also according to the soil survey. Our personal weather records are right in line with this data.

Daffodil bulbs are planted in the fall. As I stated earlier, because of our rocky soil, the hardest part of having daffodils is digging the deep holes (usually 6" deep depending on the size of the bulb). Actually, these days when I find yet another rock as I dig holes for the bulbs, I enjoy the concept of "more hole for less digging dirt" as I work the rock out of the hole rather than cursing my shovel for hitting the rock!

When the hole is a little bigger than 3 times the height of the bulb, I throw in a pinch of triple superphosphate, a handful of organic raised bed soil and a handful of organic soil amender. Then I mix the soils up, pat them down on the bottom and around the sides of the hole. I put the bulb in, pointy end up, and cover it with more organic raised bed soil and organic soil amender. I stir original soil into the top 1/2 inch or so of what I have in the hole so far. Then I add the last layer of original soil and pat it down to make it the same level as the soil around it. I do not water. There is usually some moisture already at that depth and I do not want to encourage the quail to make dirt baths! I do not use bone meal! I learned that lesson my first year of planting daffodils. The squirrels and other varmints seem to sniff out





the bone meal and have fun digging everything up - so I ended up replanting everything two and three times!

That leads me to the next benefit of having daffodils in my ArrowCreek garden. Daffodils are poisonous to bear, deer, coyote, marmots, ground squirrels, jackrabbits, cottontails, voles, field mice, quail and other birds, so the critters usually leave them alone! By not watering, not using bone meal and pounding down the original soil on top, I feel like I am defeating the critters! Once in a great while I will find a daffodil bulb perched high on top of one of our big boulders, thanks to a squirrel or a marmot; but I hope their reward is a bellyache so that they do not try it again!

There are currently over 3,500 bulbs of over 225 different daffodils that I have planted over the last six years. After blooming, I cut the dried flowers off; however, the leaves are left alone to gather energy for the bulb for next year's blossoms. After the leaves dry up and turn brown, they can be discarded or left as mulch. Daffodils multiply and naturalize by growing baby bulbs out from the main bulb into clumps. If the original bulbs are planted four to six inches apart, it will take several years for them to get crowded. The bulb clumps can be carefully dug up, gently separated, and replanted. Most of my daffodils are in informal landscape beds but some are scattered here and there in our natural high desert area of native grasses and sagebrush. In spring, the landscape is ever changing as the yellows, whites, oranges and pinks of all the different species' sizes and divisions of daffodils show their colors from late February through May.

Daffodils grow here in ArrowCreek beautifully with minimal fuss! Try them! If you would like to see how they look first, come down to the end cul-de-sac of Nambe Drive sometime during the bloom season!

ArrowCreek resident Susan Duncan is an avid gardener, photographer, writer and artist. She is a member of the American Daffodil Society and the American Iris Society and their associated local societies. Her work has been published in The Daffodil Journal, the quarterly publication of the American Daffodil Society, Inc. ...As the late daffodils finish blooming, the early irises start their blooms!