

Friends of Old Bulbs Gazette

[Old House Gardens](#), Ann Arbor, Michigan, 734-995-1486

“A small bird twitters on a leafless spray,
Across the snow-waste breaks a gleam of gold:
What token can I give my friend to-day
But February blossoms, pure and cold?
Frail gifts from Nature’s half-reluctant hand...
I see the signs of spring about the land...
[T]hese chill snowdrops, fresh from wintry bowers,
Are the forerunners of a world of flowers.”

—Sarah Doudney, 1841-1926, English novelist and poet, “Snowdrops
(Consolation),” c.1881

To Warm Your Winter, Order NOW for Spring Planting!



If you're sick and tired of winter, here's a sure cure: stroll through our virtual garden of bright, beautiful [flowers for spring planting](#) – and then treat yourself to a few of them! Despite some early sold-outs, we have plenty of amazing antique [iris](#), [daylilies](#), [dahlias](#), [glads](#), [tuberoses](#), [crocosmia](#), [rain lilies](#), and our easy [samplers](#) waiting to thrill you at [oldhousegardens.com](#). And if you order by March 1, we'll add an extra bulb! (If you already placed your spring order, never fear – your gift has been reserved for you.)

Shipping starts in early April – and don't worry, spring IS coming!

Shipping Can't Start Till Mother Nature Says So



['Erlicheer'](#) blooming in our window

Starting in January every year, we get emails from customers in warmer parts of the country who can't wait to share their good news with us: "Minor Monarque is blooming!" "My freesias are coming up!" "When I came home from work my Lent lilies were open!"

Those happy emails make the last months of our Michigan winters a lot easier to trudge through, so please keep them coming. But please remember as you're basking in spring's glory that we won't have nighttime lows consistently above freezing till early APRIL, so we don't start shipping till then. We want your bulbs to reach you in perfect condition, not frozen to mush. Thanks for your patience, and happy spring!

200,000 Tulips Free for the Picking at Amsterdam's Tulip Day



Dutch bulb-growers celebrated their eleventh annual Tulip Day recently by filling a town square in Amsterdam with 200,000 tulips in full bloom and inviting the public to pick a bouquet for free. Although it's much too early for tulips to be blooming outdoors in the Netherlands (these tulips were grown in greenhouses), Tulip Day marks the beginning of the season for tulips as cut flowers and in pots, and by the end of April this year over a billion tulip bulbs will be sold worldwide.

It's still quite cold in Amsterdam, but people dressed warmly and had a great time. Each person was given a bag that would hold up to 20 tulips of whichever types they liked best. The tulips were grown in greenhouses and trucked to the site in shallow crates filled with a planting mix so light that people pulled the tulips up roots and all and then trimmed them for the vase when they got home. For photos - and the countdown calendar for Tulip Day 2024! - take a look at their [website](#). And to plan a tulip-cutting garden of your own, you'll find this year's [offerings](#) and a handy [chart](#) for comparing bloom times at our website.

Holding Daffodils for Future Display



In-person daffodil shows are back this year, starting in early March in warmer states and continuing through early May in other areas. In a recent issue of *The Daffodil Journal* Mary Lou Gripshoever shared some tips and techniques for how to save up daffodil blossoms for exhibition – or for a birthday, wedding, or other celebration. (To find varieties that will bloom early, late, or in the middle of the season next year, see our [chart](#).)

If the event is just a week or so away, put your cut flowers in a glass of water, cover it all with a plastic bag, and store it in your refrigerator till then. You can add more flowers as they open in your garden.

On the other hand, she says, if it will be several weeks, you can use a box to refrigerate your daffodils - but store them dry. Line your box with plastic, make a cushion with tissue paper, and lay your flowers on it with the heads near the edge of the box. Then (if you have more blossoms) make another cushion of tissue paper on top of their stems and lay a second layer of flowers on top of that. If your box is long enough, you can do the same starting at the other edge of the box. Wrap the whole box in plastic and store it in your refrigerator. Then when it's time for the event, you can transport the box there, then re-cut the stems, place them in water, and arrange them to look their best.

Another great tip she suggests for show entries is to write the variety name in ball point pen on the stem of each daffodil as you cut them so that you'll identify it correctly

when filling out your entry form. Good luck, and we'd love to hear about your successes!

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