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CODS CORNER

The Newsletter of the Central Ohio Daffodil Society

March, the month of expectations and preparation. Here in CODS Corner life awakens from its long winter's nap, the bulbous plants are pushing through the frosted soil and once again we are reassured that the miracle of life's cycle exists. And what are we thinking about? Daffodils, of course, and the daffodil shows. So let's refresh ourselves on exhibiting our beautiful cultivars.

We chant the statistics of judging...Condition - 20%, Form - 20%, Substance and Texture - 15%, Color - 15%, Pose - 10%, Stem - 10%, S size - 10%. Words! Words! Figures! Figures! Yes, it is important to know these but much more important to apply them when grooming and showing our daffodils. This is the fun of competition- and more than that, the difference between the novice and the experienced exhibitor.

Has it occurred to you that your cultivars react to competition, too? I'm convinced they do, and when I talk to them and encourage them to keep growing more and more beautiful, I just know they are responding to my every word. They, too, want to go to the show table.

For instance, take one of my favorites, Galway, a beautiful golden yellow large cup. Each year my Galway tries so hard and hopefully waits to be selected and each year has been disappointed because his older, larger and more beautifully behaved brother or sister has gone to the show. So he thinks positively that next year it will be his turn.

Next year has arrived...Galway feels so confident. Galway has plunged his roots deep down in the garden loam. He has taken all of his vitamins like a very good boy or girl. He has grown strong and tall, his color is clear and unblemished, his yellow cup is beautifully rounded and his petal skirt, in spite of the spring breezes, is free from tears. He is just glowing with health and he keeps saying to himself..."Surely I'll get to go to the show this year." Each day Galway's gardening friend walks up and down the paths and talks encouraging words to all the daffodils and Galway just beams in return. His heart almost sings out, "It's my turn this year."

Then the great day arrives...oh, Galway just knows it is the day because his gardening friend is carrying a jug of warm water and a sharp knife. Yes, she is selecting her blooms for the show. She walks up and down the path; here and there she stops to cut a bloom. Then she hesitates before Galway, who stands strong and tall with a bright eyed look as though he were looking her squarely in the eye and saying "Good Morning." She gently looks him over and then with a big smile says, "Oh, you beauty." Galway's heart goes pit-a-pat and he sheds a pollen tear of joy because he knows he is going to the show at last.

Now Galway was fully prepared to go straight to the show. Little did he know that there was much more to be done. First, with a ball point pen his friend writes his name on his tall stem. Well, that was fine because Galway didn't want to get lost. Then he hears that word "Condition" and he thinks "Hmm...I thought I was just glowing with health." But his friend gently washes his face...and with detergent, too....and washes behind the ears, too, because like his Mom, those judges don't overlook a thing. Then she carefully swabs that pollen tear he had shed. Next, with a soft sable brush, she gently brushes each petal and sepal to remove any ridges and make them waxen smooth.

"Okay, now am I ready?" asks Galway.

"Oh, no. Look in the mirror. Is your necktie straight?"

"My necktie?" and Galway learns that the human eye must be able to draw an imaginary straight line from the mid-point of the top most petal through the center of the cup to the mid-point of the lower most sepal and the stem. So, if your necktie isn't straight, just gently twist the flower until you have that imaginary vertical line. It won't hurt a bit! And see how much better you look! Remember that term "Pose"? Galway's pose is first class because he is looking his friend straight in the eye as the majority of daffodils should do. If not, change the pose until it is "right at you". There are some cousins such as the Triandrus and Cyclaminous hybrids who coyly nod their heads. This is their nature. The starry eyed Tazetta is many-flowered, but must look more like an umbrella. So if they are too closely hugging one another, take a crumpled bit of tissue and gently press it in amongst them to separate them and they will show to much better advantage.

"Am I ready now?" Galway impatiently asks. Alas no, because he is told to straighten his seams. Remember when our hose had seams and the last thing, or almost the last thing we would do before going out was to check them and if necessary tug them straight? Well, daffodils have two parallel ridges on the stem and often these become twisted because the flower naturally turns to the light. So, do straighten them into a vertical position on each side of the stem. Remember, we are striving for perfection.

By this time Galway is resigned to learning all the tricks of the trade. So when he is asked to check to see if his petticoat is showing he is not at all surprised. And he looks. Sure enough, that paper thin sheath which had been his protective covering while he was still in bud is showing below his perianth skirt. It must not be torn, cut away, or removed. But, it also must not show. So carefully press it against the stem up out of sight and you will be more perfectly groomed.

Ho Hum...Galway knows he has been put through his paces. His friend suggests that he and all his cousins dip their feet in ice cold water and move to a dark cool room, even the refrigerator, for an overnight sleep. She promises to waken them early in the morning so they can have an early start. They all agree it is a fine idea. Sure enough early in the morning they are all perky, bright eyed and ready to go. Now, it is really important to give yourself plenty of time to make your entries in the show. Galway was especially anxious to get going because at long last he was really going to the exhibition and certainly wanted everybody to see him. Furthermore, he hoped the judges know that his favorite color is blue.

Let's take a lesson from Galway's experience. You may have the most beautiful hybrid grown, but if it is not in the best of condition, your daffodil will never stand a chance on the show table. Also, if you are late getting to the show, think how disappointed your beautifully groomed flowers will be...remember they have feelings, too.

--Grace P. Baird

Our display at the Garden Club of Ohio convention on April 13-14 should be very helpful to those interested in daffodils. We will have a display on culture, lists of desirable varieties and where to get them, and also we plan to illustrate the various divisions with fresh blooms--from our gardens, if possible. So--anyone with blooms to spare - call me, 488-0826 - even if it's King Alfred! Seriously, we will need lots of blooms to make a pretty as well as educational display, and that early in the season we may have difficulty getting all divisions represented. If it looks like it will be a late season, we'll send a quick letter off to Mr. Waltz or Mr. Mitsch with a plea for blooms.

We have a nice card file now on all the varieties grown by 5 of our members. There are 431 different standard varieties and 51 miniature varieties. Won't the rest of you send in your lists (large or small) soon? The card file is available to any member. Or if you're interested in a specific flower, call and maybe I can tell you where to see it.

There is a ballot in this issue. Please--all members vote for what you believe was the best in each division as it grew for you this year. If you don't have any in a particular division, or didn't think any did well enough to get a vote, let that item blank. Results in the next issue.

The city of Upper Arlington has asked the Garden Council to plant a perennial garden in the Outdoor Land Lab behind Fishinger School. Isn't this a good place for us to get some daffodils planted, too? Like a representative of each division and subdivision and also some miniatures. Anybody have any bulbs to donate?

Are you a member of the American Daffodil Society? For only \$5.00 a year you get 4 quarterly Journals and the opportunity to participate in Round Robins and seed and bulblet distribution. Like anything else--the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it. And if you're already a member, a set of back issues of the Journal is a really great buy--loaded with information! To join, send \$5.00 to George S. Lee, Jr., 89 Chichester Rd., New Canaan, Connecticut 06840.

A complimentary copy of this newsletter is being sent to all garden clubs in the Columbus Region of GCO. Any individual may join the Central Ohio Daffodil Society upon payment of \$2.00 annual dues. If your club would like to receive the quarterly newsletter, send \$1.00 for a year's subscription to the editor.

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Have you registered for the judging school yet?