

# Columbia ★ Star

Columbia's locally owned weekly newspaper since 1963

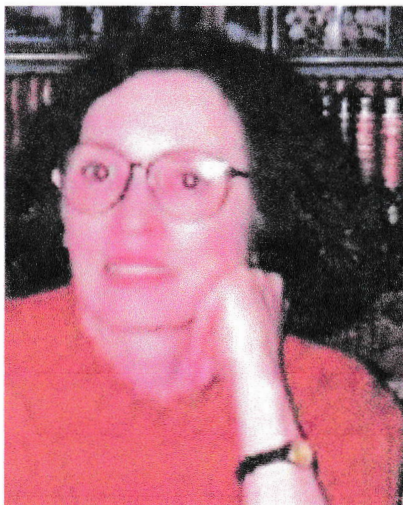
2017-01-06 / Home & Garden

## **Daffodil—Trumpeter of Spring and Bulb of the Year for 2017**

### **Stopping to smell the flowers**

By Arlene Marturano

[www.scgardenlearning.com](http://www.scgardenlearning.com)



Each new year the National Garden Bureau, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating and motivating the public to increase their use of plants in homes, gardens, and the workplace, selects one annual, perennial, bulb, and edible to showcase in "The Year of the..." series. The plant selections must match four criteria: easy to grow and to propagate, adaptable and durable in a variety of growing conditions, genetically diverse, and versatile in the landscape.

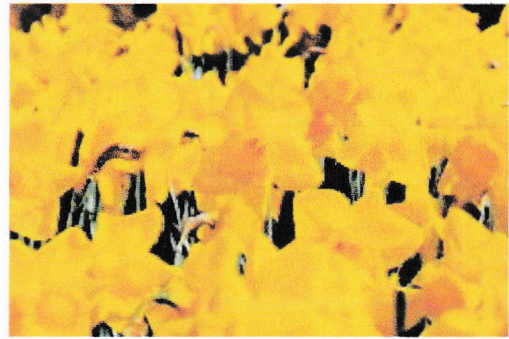
The enduring, adaptable, low-maintenance, and pest resistant daffodil is the bulb of the year for 2017. Take a look in your garden, and you will find the green leaf tips peeking up. In some areas of Columbia, paperwhites, *Narcissus papyraceus*, are in full bloom. *Narcissus* is the botanical or genus name, and daffodil is the common name.

Daffodils, spring-flowering, self-propagating perennials, are native to the meadows and forests of the Mediterranean basin. After being introduced to British gardens in the 1500s, daffodils eventually came to North America in the skirts of colonial women who sewed dormant bulbs into the hems to transport them to new homeland gardens.

Remnant ancestors of these bulbs persist today in older gardens of the east coast. The American

Daffodil Society uses the Royal Horticulture Society system of classification of daffodils to this day.

Old House Gardens, an heirloom bulb nursery, recommends planting daffodil bulbs in fall in well-drained soil and full to partial sun. Daffodils are not fertilizer dependent and do not require mushroom compost or a manure rich diet. Fertilize lightly in fall with a low nitrogen fertilizer.



Daffodil 'Dutchmaster 2' from American Meadows, Inc.

A second fertilizer application in February helps feed bulbs after bloom. After spring bloom, remove spent flowers but let leaves yellow and die back completely before cutting back. Leaves feed the bulb for next year's bloom.



Daffodil 'Rapture' trumpets in spring.

Pests like deer and rodents are not usually a problem with daffodils because the bulbs and foliage are poisonous. However, automatic irrigation systems are a problem for the bulbs since they contribute to fungal growth and bulb rot. Manual irrigation of bulbs is recommended if rain is irregular.

Generally, daffodils do not need dividing annually, but if decreased bloom indicates overcrowding, dig and divide after foliage yellows.

We've touched upon the science of daffodils but need poets like Wordsworth to capture the aesthetics of the trumpeter of spring.

I wandered lonely as a cloud That floats on high o'er vales and hills, When all at once I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees,

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze. Continuous as the stars that shine And twinkle on the milky way, They stretched in never- ending line Along the margin of a bay: Ten thousand saw I at a glance, Tossing their heads in sprightly dance. The waves beside them danced; but they Out- did the sparkling waves in glee: A poet could not but be gay, In such



a jocund company: I gazed— and gazed— but little  
thought What wealth the show to me had brought:  
For oft, when on my couch I lie In vacant or in  
pensive mood, They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude; And then my heart  
with pleasure fills, And dances with the daffodils.

#### Spring Daffodil Displays

• Biltmore Estate in Asheville, N.C. • Carolina  
Children's Garden • Colonial Williamsburg, Va. •  
Gibbs Garden, Ball Ground, Ga. • Gloucester  
Daffodil Festival, Va. • Riverbanks Botanical Garden



Paperwhites in bloom in  
December along Rosewood  
Drive



Daffodil 'Tahiti' available  
at Brent and Becky's  
Bulbs



Daffodil 'Geranium' from Brent and  
Becky's Bulbs