

# florida daffodil society news

ISSUE NO. 84

February 2013

## FLOWER SHOW COMING

March 2 and 3  
Tallahassee Nurseries

Want to help? Please call Lori Johnson at (850) 321-4885.

We have concerns as to the quality and quantity of flowers due to our unusually warm winter, but the show must go on! Our plan is -- if all else fails -- to increase the number of flower arrangements.

## OPEN WINTER GARDEN

Every year, opening the garden begins with a call to the local newspaper to announce dates. This year the "garden reporter" didn't know what a daffodil was and her boss said she'd lived in Tallahassee five years and never seen one. Flowers and literature were promptly presented. Apparently she went to the photo archives, as there appeared and reappeared in the paper a nine inch tall black and white photo of Linda Van Beck striding through the flower beds holding a sheath of daffodils. Publicity galore! There were also other large black and white photos of daffodils. The only information in the newspaper article was Linda's name and telephone number. They came -- 40 in all -- in groups and solo -- mostly they were young professional women. While there is so much current emphasis on vegetable and native plant gardening, there may be hope for future bulb gardeners.

The garden looked good -- everything was freshly mulched with pine straw that had been collected by mowing. Hardly a weed was seen. The purpose of the open garden is to educate people on a winter white garden, which is possible only in the lower South (unless you're counting snow-covered shrubs as a "white garden"). The Van Beck winter

garden is a sea of white, made up of many clumps of white-petalled tazettas, with small highlights of yellow provided by Soleil d'Or, Rijnveld's Early Sensation, Turkish tazettas, and Double Chinese Sacred Lily.

## All Having a Blooming Good Time

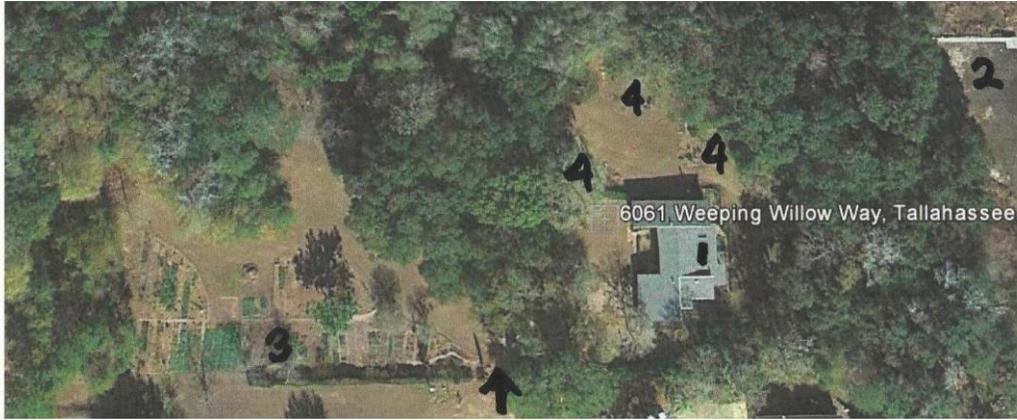
On the evening of December 18, 2012 David Atkins, of Natchez, Mississippi, called and announced the blooming of *N. Italicus*. We discovered that our two-year old rescued Natchez *N. Italicus* was also blooming here on Natchez time. Amazing and early. This year everyone is talking about the weather. Let's reverse the question. Will early blooming help the daffodil photosynthesis process? High night temperatures would not be an issue and the uncertainty of frost and freezing becomes less of a problem. It is weird to see Grand Primo growing in the shade and looking fine versus Grand Primo growing in the sun and trying to bloom at a stem height of four inches. Is it the heat? Both received the same amount of fertilizer and water.

## Bulb Sale

Last year's bulb sale unexpectedly picked up and the large volume of sales helped to create a profit, which helped underwrite donations and keep our happy relationship with the wholesalers. This year we are working to change the delivery system to out of town members in an attempt to offset high shipping charges. One wholesaler is already shipping to our garden club and master gardener vendors, and we are hoping to add shipping to non-local members as well.

**FDS Membership – Over 300 and growing!**

# IT ALL STARTED HERE



- ➔ Entrance
- 1 House
- 2 Dock/Lake Lafayette
- 3 Daffodils beds (full sun)
- 4 Original side lawn daffodil beds

The origin of the Florida Daffodil Society was John Van Beck's retirement. Having more gardening time, he wanted to find daffodils that would perennialize in the garden he had begun in 1978. He started trialing with purchased daffodils in 1992. This eventually led to the 1994 organization of the FDS with Frazier Bingham and others. The Van Beck garden has continued to mature and expand. The first beds have not changed in size and the areas of North Florida scrub, trees, and vines which surround the beds have been left untouched or only minimally cropped for bird habitats. Additional beds were started in the back field and around the house for rescued daffodils.

The Van Beck property is part of the Benjamin Chaires plantation which was begun before the Civil War. In particular, this section of rather poor soil was a

communal garden for the then slaves. They dug a ditch at the back of the property to keep heavy rainfall from carrying off the top soil as the land is a continuous downward slope from the ditch to the lake. When John started gardening, the soil was still so infertile that even weeds would not grow. John's solution was to plow chopped leaves into the soil twice a year until the soil would hold water.

The gardens were designed to be viewed from the house. Landscaping was based on cultivars of trees, shrubs and other plants originating from Japan, selected by Linda to blend into the North Florida scene. They are repeated throughout the garden, as are the formal clipped hedges, which help to give a sense of continuity and tranquility to the open spaces. The old oaks and water views give a sense of serenity to the garden.



The entrance—tazettas and Gerber daisies



A sea of white: *N. Italicus* ; Paper Whites



Winter garden from mid-view



Majestic oak in naturalized area



A spot of color: Rijnveld's Early Sensation



Lake Lafayette view with tazettas beds