



florida daffodil society news

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September 2015

CALENDAR

2015 Bulb Sale and Pickup

Saturday, October 17, 2015
Goodwood Museum and Gardens
9:15 – 11:30 AM

The FDS has again been invited to participate in the Goodwood Fall Plant Sale. We will be situated in one of the cottages behind the main house, with signage to show the way. “Left-over” bulbs will be sold -- anyone who wants to purchase bulbs may do so. MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!

MORE ON BULB SALES

This is an unusual year in that we received a half ton of bulbs in early September – Carlton, Nony, Ice Follies, and five hundred Geranium for the Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta. Keeping them aired and cooled has been interesting. The bad news is that the rest of the bulb order will not dock in Norfolk, VA but in New York City, so we may be gnawing our fingernails awaiting arrival here.

The FDS will conduct two Master Gardner programs with bulb sales in Duval County (Mandarin), and in Washington County (Chipley) where we will also put in a demonstration garden. There were two Master Gardner programs in July: Santa Rosa County (Gulf Breeze) and Jackson County (Marianna). Coming up is an invitation to talk daffodils with the Camellia Club of Valdosta, GA. They have never had a daffodil lecture, and this one will come complete with bulbs for sale.

STATE OF THE GARDEN

Some California tazettas, courtesy of BilltheBulbBaron.com, have stems that are growing ¼” per day and some Paperwhites are up. Many bulbs have roots. Now is the time, if you haven’t already done so, to sprinkle potash (wood ashes) or light bulb fertilizer on your beds. Freshen and aerate the mulch to let in air.

Tallahassee has been well-watered, but the end of September drought has arrived, which is usually followed by heavy rain which starts the underground growth season. As the Van Beck garden has matured, so have the trees and the creeping mondo grass. Carefully lifting up the “carpet” revealed daffodil bulbs growing at the base of the mondo roots. Many had diminished in size, but somehow the strategy works as the bulbs are able to put a shoot up through the thick roots.

THE BULBOUS HABIT

Usually, the discussion is about daffodils and companion bulbs. Then we take another step and say “daffodils are true bulbs as they are composed of leaves and scales whereas tulips have only scales and hippeasterums have only leaves”. When fall arrives, discussion shifts and bulbs get divided into 2 groups based on observable bulb behavior:

1) The geophyte habit: Bulbs that are well adapted to survive short term drought and react quickly to wet soils. Many of our fall bloomers are in this category, i.e., they all come up without leaves...naked ladies, *Lycoris*, and the Van Beck favorite, *sternbergia lutea* (also known as fall daffodil/autumn crocus/etc.), a single yellow that loves grass (lots of support), throws many big black seeds and doesn’t understand lawn mowers. Each year more gardeners are confused about *Lycoris*. *Lycoris radiata* bulbs comes in two forms, the late blooming large flower *Lycoris* is historic and hard to find in catalogs. The recent nursery-supplied variety, *Lycoris radiata* pumila, is from Japan, blooms early and has a smaller flower. When the last 900 historic *Lycoris* bulbs were sold, the Van Beck holdings were gone.

2) The syanthous habit: This is the common approach, leaves first, flowers second. Leaf elongation precedes flowering. Examples are daffodils, tulips, hyacinths. Whereas the geophyte plan suits “Mediterranean” climates, the syanthous plan suits cooler, moderate climates.

COMMENTS

Winter Flowers: did you buy or see the image of white tazettas in a block of four flowers, at the Post Office or on an envelope? The stamps with an informal photo of a Paperwhite cluster in sunlight were a surprise and hopefully are still for sale.

No Flower Petals: did you realize that daffodils can't make flower petals? The bulb adapts leaves into petals which are formed in whirls so that you have one whirl with points and one whirl with rounded ends. If there is room on the base, the flower sometimes makes more whirls. We call this "doubling".

A GREAT PRESALE KICKOFF IN SANTA ROSA

In Santa Rosa County Florida, the Master Gardeners, under the fundraiser leadership of Joanne Gamble, kicked off their second annual Daffodil Sale in style. There was everything but firecrackers. Samuel Greendoerfer gave a proclamation; Nineteen Facts about Daffodils. Some came straight from the American Daffodil Society, others were of dubious origin, but some are well worth remembering, such as the daffodil is now the 10th wedding anniversary official flower. Other facts include a gift of daffodils is said to ensure happiness. One should always remember to present daffodils in a bunch – the same legends that associates this cheerful flower with good fortune warns us that when given as a single bloom a daffodil can foretell misfortune. The Daffodil Sale kickoff included a parade led by cheerleaders Jennifer Weber and Helen Sprowls in authentic high school garb, complete with pompoms and great acting.

The audience was composed of experienced Master Gardeners and members of the new Master Gardener class who were unfamiliar with southern daffodil culture. Linda Van Beck was the guest speaker, providing a program on "What You Need to Know about Selling and Growing Daffodils."

The experienced Master Gardeners sold more than 3,000 bulbs in 2014. Sales included Ice follies, Carlton, Erlicheer, Nony and Tête-à-Tête, which was replaced with Trevithian this year. As expected, Trevithian became a popular sale item in 2015 with sales to date of more than 1,000.

Santa Rosa County Master Gardeners use a preorder form that includes contact information from the buyer and identification of the seller. The buyer receives a receipt. Money is collected at the time of

the sale. The contact information provides the Master Gardeners with information that prevents mishaps when daffodils are sorted and ready for delivery. Timely delivery is accomplished with convenient pick-up dates and times. The chief of this happy crew is President Frances Andrews.

NIR NOTES

Maybe we should have pushed this newcomer! ColorBlends Catalog states Nir, an Israeli hybrid, is one of the best Paperwhites – not floppy, larger and showier flowers with a sweet fragrance that is not overpowering. Allow 5-6 weeks from planting to bloom time. As you can plant anytime, you can have bloom at Thanksgiving or try for Christmas. We will have extra bulbs available at the Bulb Sale and Pickup in October.

THANKS TO GRANT MITSCH

For those of us who raise daffodils in the South, it is important to remember American hybridizer Grant Mitsch, the man who put rot resistant healthy bulbs first. His hybrids, which have been in the Van Beck garden at least 15 years, have bloomed annually with the exception of Binkie. The following dates represent the year of registration with the Royal Horticultural Society of Great Brittan:

- Pixie's Sister - 1953
- Pippet - 1963
- Charter - 1964
- Quail - 1964
- Pueblo - 1966
- Monal - 1976
- Itzim - 1982
- Hoopoe - 1977
- Binkie (1979) made her appearance in 2014 for the first time in many years
- Hillstar - 1979
- Dickcissel - 1963

One of the curiosities in the garden is an "almost Trevethian," a seedling Mitsch sent to Nat Williams in Thomasville. It always blooms, but was not distinctive enough to get named.

Happy Planting!