

Growing Things

'Orange' you special? Daffodils gone wild

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'Altruist' daffodil

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Think daffodil. The image conjured in your mind is probably yellow, maybe with a contrasting cup.

Chances are, it's not a shade of orange. Sure we've all seen salmon, apricot and orange cups on daffodils, but the whole thing? It's a flower, not a pumpkin, isn't it?

But there are some simply gorgeous daffodil cultivars in lovely orange colors. One of the most striking is "Altruist." A small, dark red cup is surrounded by copper-toned petals for a nearly glowing orange appearance. This cultivar has a less prominent trumpet and larger petals.

"Ambergate" is a large-cupped daffodil that creates a showy display with amber to orange petals and a red cup. "Kedron" petals tend toward bronze, but the cup is vibrant orange. It's a fragrant jonquilla with 1 to 3 flowers per stem.

"Double Beauty" is another bronze lovely with a bright orange center.

Double daffodils are just that, double-petaled — similar to a double tulip. The bonus is, they naturalize quite well.

Another double is "Golden Pearl," which offers white petals and a peach-yellow center, while "Electrus" is a split-cup or split-corona daffodil. They're sometimes called "butterfly" daffodils because of their unusual flat cups that are nearly as wide as the petals. This one is white with deep orange spreading across the petals.

"Czardas" is a fragrant daffodil sporting white petals and a deeply ruffled orange cup with a dark rim.

If your heart still yearns for a yellow daffy, check out “Coral Crown,” with its large yellow petals and a bright orange cup, or “Berlin,” which has bright yellow petals and a ruffled red and yellow cup.

Dutch growers describe “Tahiti” as one of the most successful daffodils in decades. A vigorous grower and a double, it has soft yellow petals with orange-copper tufts in the center, instead of a cup. Stems are strong, and buds are not susceptible to blasting — forming but failing to open. That can be a problem with some doubles.

“Flower Parade” is the progeny of “Tahiti,” just as vigorous with double white blooms and bright orange petals in the center, instead of a traditional cup. “Acropolis” is white with orange-red center segments and a spicy scent. “Monal” is an early bloomer with yellow petals and a large, bright orange-red cup. The plant forms a clump over time.

“Geranium” is a multi-flowered, fragrant daffodil. Each stem bears 2 to 3 blossoms in white with tiny orange cups. It will need mulching to survive a Midwestern winter. “Fortissimo” is a large-cupped, deep yellow daffy with a bright orange trumpet, while “Roulette” boasts white petals and a yellow cup rimmed in orange and red.

And don’t overlook “Orange Progress,” a giant trumpet daffodil with a bright orange, ruffled trumpet set against golden-yellow petals.

Giant trumpet daffodils are known as good naturalizers because they tend to multiply and have a long blooming season.