

# Prevent Flopping Stems on Paper White Daffodils

• Melinda's Garden Moments



Melinda's Garden Moments is heard Mon.-Fri. at 7:45 and 10:45 a.m. and 4:45 p.m. on 97.9 WHAV.

The fragrance and beauty of paper white daffodils are a welcome addition to the indoor winter décor. But flopping stems can detract from this beauty's floral display.

You can tame this plant's growth with a sip of alcohol. Cornell University tested this old gardening technique and found it worked. They discovered a four to six percent solution of water and 80 proof alcohol resulted in shorter plants that still produced fragrant flowers.

Dr. Miller of Cornell recommends placing the bulbs in stones and maintaining the water level below the bulbs. Replace the water with an alcohol fortified mix once the bulbs form roots and green shoots are two inches high.

He recommends using one cup of 80 proof that's 40 percent liquor with seven cups of water to create a 5 percent solution. Don't overdo, as too much alcohol can damage the bulbs and prevent flowering.

**A bit more information:** You can also reduce floppy growth by placing the newly planted bulbs in a cool, 50-60 degrees, dark location for two weeks. Then move them into a sunny area. The cool treatment results in shorter leaves and flower stalks. Grow the bulbs under artificial lights or in the sunniest window available. If this doesn't solve the problem, use an orchid cage or decorative twigs to hold the leaves upright.

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