

THE DAFFODIL

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Introduction. Although most garden articles about spring-flowering bulbs are prepared for fall publication, because that is when the bulbs are planted, I submit that a major article on daffodils is best written in the spring. The theme for such a story should be on *Planning* rather than on *Planting*. Readers are smitten, in the spring, with the glory of those early blooms, and unless they receive information right then and there about ways and means of duplicating that splash of color, by fall the impulse to buy bulbs and dig holes may well be forgotten.

The nature of the daffodil — a few facts on reasons for investing

- 1) The typical golden color of daffodils is the essence of springtime, and combines well with the blues of scillas and hyacinths as well as the varied colors of early tulips and flowering shrubs.
- 2) Many newer daffodils are appearing which have a wider color range so bulbs can be found in combinations of almost every color but blue.
- 3) The daffodil bulb is not eaten by chipmunks and other rodents because it is somewhat poisonous to them. Thus, the investment in these bulbs is self-protected, though the initial cost may seem high.
- 4) The daffodil is more adaptable to a variety of soils and temperatures than the hyacinth and tulip, for instance, which tend to "peter-out" after a few years.
- 5) Many "naturalized" plantings are known to be still blooming after 50 years or more, testifying that the daffodil bulb, if well-planted in the first place, is a sturdy and even prosperous plant.
- 6) Daffodil bulbs in the garden may be over-planted with annuals or leafy vegetables, and will be better off for the shade these provide during the heat of summer. The bulb leaves must be left to "ripen" for 6 weeks after the blooming period, but then may be removed, or perhaps braided, to make room for seedlings. This works out to late May — late June, depending on April bloom time.

The many types of daffodils. Although all daffodils are narcissus, and vice-versa, there are about 25 species and wild hybrids in this branch of the Amaryllis family, so the variation is much greater than most people realize. Some of the species are very tiny, and are classed as "miniature". Those include *Narcissus triandrus*, *N. cyclamineus*, *N. jonquilla*, and *N. bulbocodium*. Many of these species are dug from the hills of Spain and Portugal, where they are native, and are sold cheaply, but in general these small species are not good garden subjects and most do not persist more than a year or so. The larger species have been selected and improved by cross-breeding until now there are thousands of named varieties, the majority introduced since World War II. Most familiar are the trumpets, now designated as Division 1.

Another of the larger species is the so-called "poet" daffodil (Division 9), with the red-rimmed small green eye and the sweet scent. By crossing the poets with the trumpets, the very lovely large-cup (Division 2) and small-cup (Division 3) types have been developed. These are the ones with the widest color range: gold petals with red cups, white petals with pink cups, apricot petals with orange cups, creamy petals with green cups, rimmed gold, etc. Many of these beautiful daffodils are not well-known as only a few varieties are widely sold. The acquiring of exciting ones takes some planning ahead.

Hybridizers have also been working with the miniature species, and in crossing these with the "standard" trumpets and poets, a whole race of charming small golden daffodils has been developed. The triandrus hybrids (Division 5), include 'Thalia', often found in larger garden stores, but there are many others, both white and yellow, with names like 'Merry Bells', 'Silver Bells', 'Jingle Bells', 'Harmony Bells'. All have several flowers per stem, slightly drooping like bells.

The hybrids developed from *N. cyclamineus* are equally delightful. They tend to bloom earliest of all, one to a stem. A well-known one is 'February Gold', but among dozens of others are orange-cupped ones such as 'Jetfire', and white and yellow ones such as 'Dove Wings'. These are all in Division 6.

Division 7 is derived from *N. jonquilla*, a species which has 5 or 6 very

small, golden, sweet-scented flowers per stem. These hybrids are perhaps the most popular of the smaller flowers for they are hardiest as well as very prolific in bloom. Named varieties include 'Trevithian', but by looking further one can find a whole aviary of jonquil hybrids: 'Flycatcher', 'Pipit', 'Kinglet', 'Dickcissel', 'Quail', 'Chat', 'Veery', 'Vireo', 'Curlew'...as well as a host of other fine ones.

Other hybridizers are working to improve the double forms (Div. 4) so that these camellia-like daffodils now have strong stems and a color range that goes all the way to pink. The flowers in Division 8 are more tender. This section includes the winter-forcing 'Paper White', but there are some which are more hardy, such as 'Geranium' and 'Golden Dawn'. These are late-bloomers, coming after the trumpets are long gone.



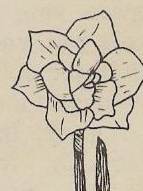
DIVISION I — TRUMPET NARCISSUS. One flower to the stem; trumpet or corona as long or longer than the perianth segments.



DIVISION II — LARGE-CUPPED NARCISSUS. One flower to a stem; cup or corona more than one-third, but less than equal to the length of the perianth segments.



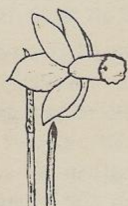
DIVISION III — SMALL-CUPPED NARCISSUS. One flower to a stem, cup or corona not more than one-third the length of the perianth segments.



DIVISION IV — DOUBLE NARCISSUS. Double flowers.



DIVISION V—TRIANDRUS NARCISSUS. Usually more than one flower to a stem, head is drooping, perianth segments often reflexed and of a silky texture. The cup is shaped like half an egg.



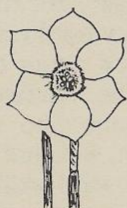
DIVISION VI — CYCLAMINEUS NARCISSUS. One flower to a stem, perianth reflexed and corona straight and narrow.



DIVISION VII — JONQUILLA NARCISSUS. Usually several flowers to a stem, although a few cultivars have only one bloom.



DIVISION VIII — TAZETTA NARCISSUS. Usually two to six or more flowers to a stem, sweet scented, very small-cupped. Perianth segments rounded and often somewhat crinkled.



DIVISION IX — POETICUS NARCISSUS. Single flowers, one to a stem, glistening white petals, small flat cup edged with red.

DIVISION X — SPECIES AND WILD FORMS AND WILD HYBRIDS. All species and wild, or reputedly wild forms and hybrids.



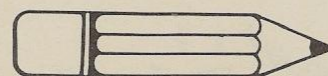
DIVISION XI — SPLIT CORONA NARCISSUS. Corona split for at least one-third of its length. The corona may be split into three or six segments spreading outward towards the tips of the perianth segments.

DIVISION XII — MISCELLANEOUS NARCISSUS. All narcissus not falling into any of the foregoing divisions.

Sources of information. No article about daffodils is complete without the mention of the American Daffodil Society. Any interested gardener is welcome to join this group. Membership is \$10.00/year, for which one receives a quarterly Journal (National Council prize-winner). Checks for membership, made out to the American Daffodil Society, may be mailed to Wm. O. Ticknor, Exec. Dir., Tyner, NC 27980. The ADS office has for sale a number of informative booklets: the *Handbook for Growing, Exhibiting, and Judging Daffodils* (\$3.50), and *Daffodils to Show and Grow*, a list of about 2,000 of the best-known cultivars and species, with information on Division, color, size, parentage, year of introduction, etc. (\$4.00). Nine sets of slides are available for rent (\$7.50 to members, \$15.00 to non-members) by applying to the chairman: Mrs. Kelly Shryoc, 2933 Owenwood Dr., Ft. Worth, TX 76109.

Much information can be gleaned by perusing the catalogs of daffodil growers. U.S.A. sources include: Richard Havens (handling Grant Mitsch originations) P.O. Box 218, Hubbard, Oregon 97032 (colored illustrations, \$2.50, redeemed with first order); de Jager Bulbs, Inc., 188 Asbury St., S. Hamilton, Mass. 01982 (\$1.00); The Daffodil Mart, Rte. 3, Box 208 R, Gloucester, VA. 23061. Overseas sources: John Lea, Dunley Hall, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcestershire, DY13 OTX, England; Carncairn Daffodils, LTD, Broughshane, Ballymena, Co. Atrim, N. Ireland; Rathowen Daffodils, Dergmoney, Omagh, C. Tyrone, N. Ireland; and for those who would like the challenge of acclimatizing daffodils from "down under" (the bulbs arrive in the spring and have to be held until fall to plant): Jackson's Daffodils, P.O. Box 77, Geeveston, Tasmania, 7116 (Australia).

A spring-written story, giving this information, will enable those interested to order catalogs from these growers so orders for bulbs may be sent in early summer. The earlier the better, as some stocks sell out quickly. Also, early orders are delivered early in the fall, so that planting can be done before cold weather. Thus, it is good to remind your readers for unusual daffodils, it's a sound idea to **PLAN AHEAD.**



Book Notes

Uncultivated Nuts of the United States, Agricultural Information Bulletin 450. Free. Forest Service Publications, P.O. 2417, Washington, DC 20013.

Theme Gardens by Barbara Damrosch. Workman, 1982, \$19.95. Sixteen gardens with schematic drawings and lists of plants, planned for small areas.

The Cacti of the United States and Canada by Lucretia Breazeale Hamilton. Stanford University Press, 1982, \$85.00. Over 1000 pages of useful information including keys, tables, and range maps. A definitive work.

The New York Botanical Garden Illustrated Encyclopedia of Horticulture, Vol. 10. by Thomas H. Everett, Garland, 1982, Set \$525. The final volume in this encyclopedia is as useful and comprehensive as the first.

Kew: gardens for science and pleasure edited by F. Nigel Hepper. Stemmer House, 1982, \$24.94. An excellent overview of Kew, its history and contemporary importance written by 16 botanical scholars.

Fuchsias for House and Garden by Sidney Clapham. Universal Books, 1982, \$15.00. Contains a fuchsia growers calendar and information on how to pot, prune, and propagate a plant that is making a comeback.

Hedges, Screens & Espaliers: how to select, grow and enjoy by Susan Chamberlin. HPBooks, 1982, \$9.95. How to use plants as living walls, borders, and dividers. Useful information on how to use plants for energy conservation and the creation of a more attractive environment.

Pruning: how to guide for gardeners by Robert L. Stebbins and Michael MacCaskey. HPBooks, 1983, \$7.95. How to prune trees, shrubs, flowers, and fruit. Good material on tools and how to use them and how to select an arborist.

Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest: an illustrated guide by Arthur R. Kruckeberg. University of Washington Press, 1982, \$24.95. More than 200 line drawings of native species that have garden merit accompany the plant descriptions. Should prove useful to landscapers and conservationist.

A Field Guide to Tropical and Subtropical Plants by Frances Perry and Roy Hay. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1982, \$10.95 (paper \$6.95). About 200 tropical ornamentals with full-color photographs, arranged alphabetically by genera in five groups: trees, shrubs, climbers, aquatics, and miscellaneous. Handy.

The Organic Gardener's Complete Guide to Vegetables and Fruits by Anne M. Halpin. Rodale Press, 1982, \$19.95. Over 500 pages of gardening information with special guides to growing 52 fruits and 59 vegetables.

Living with Flowers: a guide to bringing flowers into your daily life by Denise Diamond. Morrow, 1982, \$17.00. What to do with flowers after growing them — arranging, drying, eating, etc.

Ornamental Shrubs: hardy in temperate climates by C. E. Lucas Phillips and others. Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1982, \$29.95. Covers 250 genera and over 1000 species and varieties. Growth form, pruning needs and habitat are discussed for each genus. Useful.