

RED BUTTE GARDEN

UTAH'S BOTANICAL GARDEN

Garden Plant Display

Daffodil (Narcissus)



Daffodils are flowering bulbs in the Amaryllis family. For many, they signify the official beginning of spring. Native to meadows and woodlands of southern Europe and northern Africa, today they are grown ornamentally all over the world.

Daffodils come in colors ranging from white, to yellow, to orange, and can be a single color or multi-colored. Some newly cultivated varieties even have pinkish tones. Through centuries of hybridization, there are now over 25,000 cultivars! They range in height from shorter than six inches to as tall as twenty inches, with flowers that range in size from less than an inch to over five inches. A very few species and cultivars have a sweet fragrance.

Daffodils were chosen as a major focus of our spring bulb display because it is long-lived, naturalizes, multiplies over time, exhibits diversity of color, size, bloom type and timing, and is disliked by wildlife such as deer, rabbits, and squirrels. They perform well here because our climate is similar to their native range. Since Daffodils are dormant during the summer months, they are also drought tolerant.

DESIGNING WITH DAFFODILS

It's nearly impossible to make a mistake designing with Daffodils because their colors rarely compete with other plants and they almost always complement the landscape. They look good in patio containers, cottage gardens, English borders, or naturalized in a woodland.

Daffodils planted in mixed borders draw the eye away from dormant plants.

To determine the number of bulbs needed for a planting project, first measure the square footage of the entire planting bed. Plan on 2-4 bulbs per square foot for larger cultivars, and 5-10 bulbs per square foot for smaller cultivars. Then, because Daffodils look best when planted in groups rather than one by one, lay the bulbs out in clusters of 8-12. While planting, make sure each bulb has room to multiply underground over time.

PLANTING, CARE, AND MAINTENANCE

Fall is the season to plant spring blooming bulbs. They thrive when planted in sunny locations in well-draining soil. Depending on the variety, plant bulbs three to six inches deep, following the long-time rule of planting a bulb three times as deep as it is tall.

Daffodils depend on winter and spring to obtain moisture for the growing season. If the previous winter was dry, additional spring water may be necessary to prolong blooming. After they finish blooming, wait until the foliage begins to turn yellow (usually in June) before cutting it back. This will ensure a strong bloom the following season. While the foliage is still green it is producing energy to be stored in the bulb for next year's bloom.

If a planting becomes too dense, the size of the

blooms will decrease. They can then be dug up and replanted with more space between the bulbs.

DID YOU KNOW

- Daffodils go by many names: Jonquils, Narcissus, Paperwhites, and in England as Lent Lilies.
- Daffodils are what some people refer to as a cult flower because of the enormous fan base of breeders, growers, and exhibitors.
- Daffodils contain a compound known as narciclasine which is being researched as a cancer treatment.
- The Daffodil is the national flower of Wales.
- Daffodils are the official 10-year wedding anniversary flower.
- Paperwhite Daffodils (Tazetta division) are one of the easiest bulbs to force for indoor blooms.
- The name Narcissus is derived from a popular Greek myth in which a handsome youth, named Narkissos, became so enamored with his own reflection that he stared at it until he died.
- Red Butte Garden has been recognized as an official Daffodil Display Garden by the American Daffodil Society since 2013.

The American Daffodil Society recognizes 13 divisions of Daffodils based on species and floral parts (petals, sepals, and cups).

The most iconic Daffodils are in the following divisions:

- *Trumpet, Large-Cupped, and Short-Cupped: One large flower per stem, where the center cup stands out like the bell of a trumpet.*
- *Jonquilla: Two to six flowers per stem, with strong fragrance and rush-like foliage. This was the first Daffodil brought to the U.S., which is why some Americans call any and all Daffodils “Jonquils.”*

- *Poeticus: Typically one flower per stem. The petals are white with a very short or disk-shaped cup that is darker than the petals.*

The most significant variations of cups and/or petals are in the following divisions:

- *Double: Double petals, corona or both.*
- *Triandrus, Cyclamineus: Petals that flare backward.*
- *Bulbocodium: Insignificant petals and a large cup that resembles a hoop petticoat.*
- *Split-Cupped: A cup that is split along at least half its length.*
- *Tazetta: Three to twenty sweetly-scented and short cupped flowers per stem. Good for forcing indoors; not cold hardy in our area.*
- *Miscellaneous: Unique Daffodils that don't fit within the other divisions.*
- *Species and Wild Forms: Species Daffodils and their hybrids.*
- *Miniatures: Forms found in other divisions but with blooms smaller than two inches in diameter.*

WHERE TO SEE THIS COLLECTION

Daffodils bloom every spring throughout Red Butte Garden, typically from mid March through early May. The Four Seasons Garden showcases Daffodil plantings in large masses. The Floral Walk and Rose Gardens demonstrate how easily Daffodils can be incorporated into smaller beds. Check back as we continue to add Daffodils to our newest garden, the Water Conservation Garden.

