

GROWING BEAUTIFUL DAFFODILS IN YOUR GARDEN IN THE MIDWEST

- (1) Visit the Midwest Daffodil Society's daffodil show in late April and see the many different varieties available. During April and May, visit the gardens at the Chicago Botanic Garden in Glencoe. Nothing beats seeing the blooms up close. Decide what colors and forms you like best.
- (2) Write for catalogs in late March or April. Order and pay for your bulbs early. Growers will ship the bulbs to you in September. Put them in a cool (not refrigerated) and airy place until Halloween. Plant them before Halloween or, at the latest, Thanksgiving.
- (3) Choose a well-drained, sunny place. Hillsides and raised beds are best. DRAINAGE is the key. Protection from wind is important, too. Spade at least twelve inches deep. Improve your clay with well-rotted compost, soil amendment, or planting mix and raise the bed. Slightly acidic soil is best, so you might add soil sulfur if you have alkaline soil.
- (4) Plant your daffodils so that their top (pointed end) is at least two times as deep as the bulb is high (top of a 2" bulb is 4" deep). Exactness isn't crucial; they'll adjust. Plant bulbs deeper in sandy soil than in clay.
- (5) If you are to leave them down for years, then work some bulb food into the soil (it may do NOTHING for the plant the first year!) After planting, top-dress with a sprinkling of 5-10-10. Top-dress again with 5-10-10 when the leaf-tips emerge. As they flower, top-dress with 0-10-10 or 0-0-50. High-nitrogen fertilizer should be avoided.
- (6) Daffodils need lots of water while they are growing. Water immediately after planting and keep them moist until the rains come. Continue watering for three weeks or so after blooming time if there is little rain; then stop watering. The bulbs make their next year's bloom after flowering. (Your first-year bloom is largely due to the previous grower of the bulb.)
- (7) Most Midwest growers do not lift bulbs, unless to divide them. Mulch the bed. If you water, or grow other things there, then you should dig them. WARMTH + MOISTURE = BULB ROT.
- (8) Never cut the foliage until it begins to yellow. Then is the time to dig them. Wash the bulbs thoroughly and let them dry completely (at least a week, out of the sun). Put them in onion sacks (or panty hose) and hang them in the coolest place you can find until time to plant. Good air circulation will keep storage rot at a minimum. The bulbs may be rinsed with certain chemicals to protect them further.
- (9) Join the MDS and get some more quality bulbs cheaply at our October sale and later at our bulb exchange. And, have a good time socializing with another group of garden folks. The following spring, bring your best blooms to the Show and show your growing skills. Your Best-in-Show daffodil is but a year away!
- (10) Consider joining the American Daffodil Society to tune in to the national and international community of daffodil growers and showers. Receive a colorful and informative journal and find yourself receiving many informative catalogs and mailings.

Thanks to the Northern California Daffodil Society and Bob Spotts.