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DAFFODILS FOR EVERYONE

By C. C. HILLARY

FOR hundreds of years, poets and authors of renown in almost every country have extolled in verse and prose the loveliness of the daffodil. And well they might, since it is a floral gem of great beauty and one so widely grown that it might well be called everybody's flower.

It is a flower which has brightened countless homes and cheered many sad hearts—qualities which endear it to everyone. It picks well, lasts for a week and sometimes more when cut and placed in water, and is tolerant of a wide variety of soils and climates. What more could one want?

Daffodils are never seen to greater advantage than when naturalised in big drifts in woodlands, parks and extensive shrubberies. Except in very large gardens, however, the naturalisation of daffodils is almost impossible, but a happy compromise which usually leads to charming results in most small gardens can be arranged by planting clumps of daffodils under deciduous trees, round the base of shrubs, and in irregularly-spaced groups of varying size in border beds and alongside garden walks and paths.

Large clumps of from a dozen to two dozen bulbs are preferable to small ones, and a richer and more even flowering is obtained when one variety only is included in each clump. Bulbs in clumps should be spaced about six inches apart.

When daffodils are grown for exhibition or cut-flower purposes, their cultivation and accessibility are simplified if they are grown in beds about four feet wide of any convenient length, with 18 inches between the beds. The bulbs should be planted in rows spaced about a foot apart, with eight inches between the bulbs. If the ends of the

rows are marked with neat sticks, cultivation can be carried out even before the shoots show through the ground.

In very heavy soil and in low-lying localities the beds should be raised six inches above the level of the paths to assist the drainage.

CULTIVATION COUNTS

Most experts agree that the chief factor in growing good daffodils is deep and thorough cultivation of the soil. The more the ground is cultivated prior to planting, the better the results are likely to be. To help maintain the degree of aeration conferred on the soil by thorough cultivation prior to planting, frequent hoeing between the rows should be carried out during the growing period.

Modern daffodils are so beautiful that they merit the best we can do for them as regards site and soil. A position where the sun shines for at least half the day should be chosen and it is an advantage if it provides some shelter from strong winds.

MANURING

A good, friable loam is the most suitable type of soil, but almost any kind of sandy ground will grow good daffodils provided it is enriched sufficiently with old animal manure or a good leafy compost, plus reasonable amounts of blood and bone and sulphate of potash.

Potato manure (e) is also a suitable fertiliser for enriching soil for daffodils

and so is fowl manure, but when the latter is used it is essential that sulphate of potash (about a handful to the square yard) should be worked into the soil at the same time.

Whatever manures are used for enriching the soil, it is essential that they

If one forking or digging does not mix the manures properly with the soil, then it should be dug or forked over again and the work on the second occasion should be commenced from the opposite end of the bed.

PLANTING TIME

Depth of planting varies according to the size of the bulb, but the soil cover should never be less than twice the diameter of the bulb. Many experts consider that even deeper planting is preferable, especially when the bulbs are to be left down for two years or more.

It is always a good plan to surround each bulb with clean sand at planting time. This helps the drainage and prevents manures in the soil from coming into actual contact with the bulbs.

Except in the hottest soils, daffodil bulbs should be left undisturbed in the ground for two or three years. When the soil conditions are suitable, the flowers in the second year are almost invariably of better quality than those produced the first season after planting, and a moderately long stay in the ground encourages a better increase in bulbs. At the end of the third year the bulbs will probably be overcrowded and, when the next planting season arrives, the clumps should be lifted, divided, and replanted in fresh ground with suitable spacings.

Daffodils in dry climates require plenty of water during dry periods, and the ground must always be kept well moistened during flowering. Any dryness of the ground immediately before and during flowering invariably results in shortened stems.

When cutting daffodils, it is wise to carry around a bucket of water and plunge the stems in water as soon as they are cut. This will save loss of sap, prevent air entering the stems, and prolong the life of the flowers.

MANY VARIETIES

There are hundreds of varieties of daffodils and most of them are beautiful. Some are very expensive and



Daffodils lend themselves to decorative arrangements in the home.

be placed below the bulbs. The best way of doing this is to remove the top spit to the depth of a spade and then fork the manures evenly and thoroughly through the lower layer of soil.

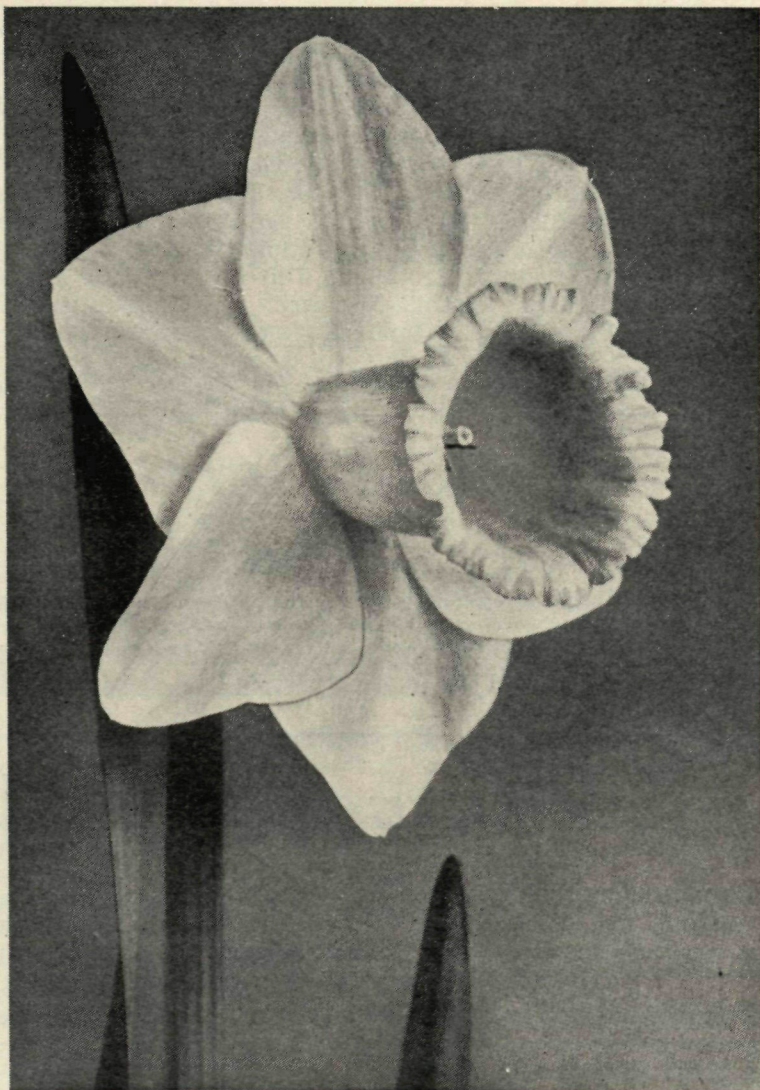
varieties such as Trouseau, Green Island and Broughshane still cost several pounds per bulb.

Fortunately, there are many splendid daffodils available at prices cheap enough to place them within the reach of all. Among these are the lovely yellow trumpet daffodils King Alfred, Godolphin, Bells 15, Dawson City, and Golden City. All of these grow well in this State and can be relied upon to produce attractive blooms on good stems. They flower in the order mentioned and when all are grown they will provide a succession of blooms in the garden for a number of weeks on end.

Somewhat dearer, but well worth the extra money, are the yellow trumpets Elgin, Principal, Garron and Golden Wealth. These are exceptionally well-formed daffodils with splendid perianths and all of them have won awards on the show bench.

The all-yellow, large-crowned daffodils Havelock and Carlton are also well worth a place in every garden, and so is the lovely St. Egwin—a superb flower which is carried on the longest of sturdy stems. All three reproduce well and flower freely.

Two splendid white trumpet varieties are Beersheba, and Ardclynis. Both have long, frilled trumpets, and the flowers are well poised on stems of reas-



The trumpet blooms are always popular.

onable length. Cantatrice, with a shorter trumpet, is also well worth growing.

Bonython, a bi-colour trumpet, is another lovely flower. It is one of the most vigorous daffodils in my garden and seems to thrive well everywhere.

Among the red and orange-cupped daffodils there are many fine varieties. Jean Hood and Fortune are two which I can especially recommend. The

former has a perfectly-proportioned, white perianth, with an orange-red cup, and the flowers are carried on superb stems often two feet long. Fortune is a larger daffodil with a yellow perianth and orange-red cap. Both varieties multiply exceedingly well.

Other daffodils of merit which are well worth inclusion in every collection are: Polindra, Bodilly, Stronghold, Diolet, Daisy Schaffer, Porthilly, Sincerity, Effective, Flava, Bread and Cheese,

Killigrew, Tunis, Hugh Poate, and Carbineer.

All of the varieties I have mentioned are grown in Western Australia and can be obtained from one source or another.

In case you are asked what the difference is between a daffodil and a narcissus—there is none. All narcissi are daffodils and all daffodils are narcissi. Daffodil is merely the English name for narcissus.



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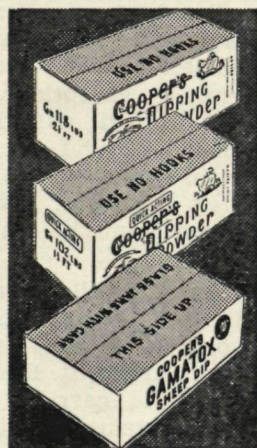
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