



1883 Poeticus Recurvus
Speciosus Narcissus Division 10



1885 Lemon Beauty
(Split Corona) Division 11



1887 Tete a Tete
Miniature Division 12

DAFFODILS

I will always remember at this time of year, as the Daffodil brings back a memory that seems like only yesterday. At St. Johns Church where I used to go in Parkstone Dorset with my Mother and Father, every Mothering Sunday, the children would be called forward to the altar to collect a bundle of Daffodils to go back and give to Mum.

I thought it would be therefore appropriate for March, that we call again on RCHS Vice Chairman Margaret McIntosh, this time to give us some great insight into the Daffodil (Narcissus).

In Greek mythology, Narcissus, son of a River God was very handsome and vain. He spurned many lovers including Echo. The Goddess of retribution made him fall in love with his own reflection. He pinned away and up sprang the Narcissus flower.

Narcissi, commonly called Daffodils herald spring. There are now thousands of daffodil cultivars, all can be grouped into 13 divisions each with similar characteristics. They come in a variety of colours, shapes and sizes, for every type of garden use.

PLANTING IN THE BORDER. Plant bulbs in autumn, in sun or light shade. Good drainage is essential, as they can easily rot. Plant 2-3 times their depth in clumps for best effect. Add some bonemeal to the planting hole. A bulb planter can be used to make a hole for each single bulb- this removes a plug of earth, which is replaced on top of the bulb.

GROWING IN POTS. They grow well in pots, use prepared bulb fibre. Bulbs can be planted close together and do not need to be deep. Keep outdoors in a sheltered spot. Add a top dressing of grit to protect young growth from slugs and snails. Cover with chicken wire if squirrels are about.

For indoor use choose PAPERWHITE or SOLEIL d'OR. These multi-headed flowers give wonderful fragrance and can be forced for Christmas.

PLANTING IN THE LAWN. Daffodils can be naturalised in the lawn. For a natural effect scatter a handful over the grass and plant where they fall. Dig a hole using a bulb planter (see above). Drop in a little mixed sand/bonemeal, plant as before. For swathes of flowers, lift a length of turf, plant bulbs and roll turf back over. They will grow through the grass. **NB** It must not be mown until the leaves die down.

Finally many of you must have seen the series on TV over this winter featuring Christine Walkden.

The RCHS has the great pleasure of welcoming Christine on Tuesday May 26th at 8pm for an "Evening with Christine Walkden"

Tickets are limited so don't delay. £10 Each. Call Warren on 01923 451616.

DEALING WITH FOLIAGE. After flowering, plants should be deadheaded to prevent seed setting. Foliage must be left to die naturally.(normally 6-8 weeks). This allows nutrients to return to the bulb. Foliage should not be tied up, plaited or cut back. Diseased leaves can be removed.

LEAVING BULBS IN THE GROUND. Bulbs can remain in the ground after flowering, if you have the space to leave them undisturbed. Next year they will produce another display of blooms. But to do this they will need some fertiliser- organic pellets – when the bulbs emerge from the soil. Fork in lightly between the bulbs as they appear. This also prevents water gathering at the neck, which can cause them to rot. Repeat the fertiliser after flowering.

WINDOW BOXES/HANGING BASKETS/ROCK GARDENS Miniature varieties are great here, 6-8" tall, eg. TETE a TETE or JACK SNIPE. Plant them in clumps, with hyacinths and ivy.

PLANTING FOR DISPLAY. You can plant bulbs in layers- 'LASAGNE SYSTEM.' Bulbs experience no problem when planted one over another. They will simply grow through and flower as usual. More bulbs - more blooms!

A MIXED POT. Plant tulips, narcissi, and crocus in a large container and enjoy a wonderful succession of flowers. The lowest layer will be the bulbs that flower last

DIVISIONS. The various divisions (large/trumpet/small etc) are only significant if you plan to exhibit your blooms.

I hope you enjoy the wonderful Daffodil this spring.

Margaret and many other members will be displaying their entries into the **RCHS SPRING SHOW on Saturday 28th March 2015 at the Great Barn RUISLIP from 1pm until 4pm.** Entry is free so please do come along and see the fantastic display of over 200 daffodils. Also 3 local Ruislip Schools will be entering the show for the first time ever, so please come along and support the next generation of gardeners!

For details please see the website www.ruisliphorticultural.org.uk or contact Warren on 01923 451616.

RCHS MAILBAG

This month I would like to feature ONE mailbag question, however we do reply to ALL emails received at rchstalks@gmail.com.

Q What is the first thing I should do when tackling the garden again after the winter? Joyce, Ickenham.

A Well that is the sixty four thousand dollar question, and I'm afraid I haven't got the whole magazine to fill up, so I will tell you one of the thousands of jobs that I like to get done early. It is a good idea to spike the lawn every spring. Aeration involves perforating the soil with small holes to allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate the grass roots. This helps the roots grow deeply and produce a stronger, more vigorous lawn. The main reason for aerating is to alleviate soil compaction. Compacted soils have too many solid particles in a certain volume or space, which prevents proper circulation of air, water and nutrients within the soil. So using a garden fork, every nine inches across the whole lawn push in the fork and wiggle it slightly to open the soil. You can dress the lawn lightly afterwards.

See you next month.

Warren