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Thursday, May 1, 2025



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How to Grow Daffodil Flowers: The Complete Guide



Yellow daffodils, 'Jetfire' Narcissus, in flower in early spring

Photo Credit: Alex Manders/Shutterstock

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Planting, Growing, and Caring for Daffodils

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Nothing heralds spring like the cheerful daffodil! These sunshine-yellow flowers emerge at winter's end to lift our spirits. Plus, daffodils are deer- and rodent-resistant bulbs (unlike tulips)! Learn more about how and when to plant daffodils—and the delightful variety of choices, from the classic yellow to mini daffodils.

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About Daffodils

Daffodils are hardy perennials that come back year after year, spreading and often naturalizing. They are fall-planted bulbs usually planted in October, and the

most regions of North America, except in the hottest, wettest areas, such as South Florida.

There are thousands of daffodil varieties. The traditional daffodil flower may be a showy yellow or white, with six petals and a trumpet-shaped central corona. Still, many cultivated varieties ("cultivars") exist today if you fancy experimenting with a more exotic double, frilled, or bicolor narcissus.

Daffodils are suitable for planting between shrubs, on a border, or even in pots. We especially love daffodils in a woodland garden and large groves. You'll find that many gardeners plant the bulbs not just by the dozens but by the hundreds! Daffodil flowers can also be forced inside to add cheer to the winter months, making great springtime cut flowers.

Choosing Daffodil Bulbs

Select high-quality daffodil bulbs that

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DutchGrown™ bulbs are of the highest quality, ensuring optimum performance. You probably haven't seen daffodils bigger than their top-sized daffodil bulbs. See [where to buy daffodil bulbs.](#)

Read Next

- [March Birth Flower: Daffodils!](#)
- [The Best Flower Bulbs to Plant in the Fall](#)
- [How to Grow Tulip Flowers: The Complete Guide](#)

PLANTING

Daffodils do best in full sun, though they

drainage is vital as they are susceptible to rot when kept too wet. Hillsides and raised beds work well. Otherwise, improve clay soil by amending it (12 inches deep) with organic material such as well-rotted compost.

When to Plant Daffodil Bulbs

- Plant daffodil bulbs in the fall—at least 2 to 4 weeks before the ground freezes. See local frost dates.

How to Plant Daffodil Bulbs

- Plant the bulb with the top (pointy end) set about two to three times as deep as the bulb is tall. For example, the top of a 2-inch bulb should be about 4 inches in the ground, while a 3-inch bulb should be planted 5 to 6 inches deep.
- Where winters are severe, make sure there are at least 3 inches of soil covering the bulb.
- Daffodils will tolerate crowding, but they prefer to be placed about 3 to 6 inches apart.

[Learn more about preparing soil for planting.](#)

- Resist the temptation to uncover spring-flowering plants such as daffodils and [tulips](#). You can loosen mulch, but the shoots will still benefit from protection against cold, drying winds in early spring.
- Daffodils contain oxalic acid—a substance that makes them unpalatable to most rodent pests. However, if yours are being bothered, consider adding sharp pieces of shells or a pelleted rodent deterrent into and around each planting hole.

GROWING

- Apply a low-nitrogen, high-potash (potassium) fertilizer after flowering if bulbs are not performing as desired.
Learn more about [preparing the soil for planting](#) and [soil amendments](#).
- Water late-flowering daffodils in dry spring weather (flowers may abort in dry conditions).

After Daffodils Bloom

- After the flowers fade, you can dead-head (pinch off) the faded flowers.
- However, do NOT remove the leaves until they turn yellow. Daffodils use their leaves to store energy in the bulbs for next year's flower. The plant continues to absorb nutrients for about 6 weeks after the flowers have faded. If you cut or mow them back too early, they will not bloom next year.
- Keep watering the plants even if the blooms have faded.
- Once the leaves have yellowed and died back naturally, you can snip off the dead leaves at the base (or pull lightly while twisting the leaves). You can also mow the area without worry.
- Once daffodils (and tulips) have gone by, add bone meal to the soil for next year's blooms.

If the dying leaves offend your sensibility, plant other bulbs, such as daffodils, daylilies, or true lilies, in the same area so

According to the American Daffodil

Society, there are 13 official daffodil

flower types and more than 25,000

named cultivars!

Whatever variety you choose, the most important tip is: Get the best quality bulbs for the best flowers. The bigger the bulbs, the better. Look for top-size bulbs, the biggest bulbs on the market.

- ‘**Dutch Master**’ is the classic daffodil—big and yellow with a very large cup and oversized trumpets. They bloom early, naturalize easily, and are great for planting in masses.



- ‘**Barrett Browning**’ is the recognizable pure white daffodil with a bright orange trumpet surrounded by a golden

ily, and do well in warmer climates, too.



- '**Tahiti**' is a stunner with layers of rounded, golden yellow petals interspersed with frilly, red-orange accents. They bloom mid to late season, last longer, and make an excellent cut flower.



- '**Tete a Tete**' is an adorable mini daffodil that flowers early and blooms for

ing varieties. Ideal for flower beds and containers and naturalizes with ease.



- **'Jetfire'** is another mini daffodil with bright orange cups and swept-back yellow petals. It blooms in early spring, is very long-lasting, and doesn't flop over.



- **'Petit Four'** is a good choice for a partially shady site. The flower has white petals with a double cup of apricot pink and grows 16 inches tall.

daffodil is very fragrant with a lovely gardenia-like scent. Blooms in late spring and makes an excellent cut flower.

- ‘**Thalia**’ is an all-white daffodil, making it wonderful for moon gardens. [Learn about 20 pure white flowers to include in your garden.](#)

[See plenty more varieties here!](#)

HARVESTING

- When cutting daffodils, keeping these flowers in their own vase is best, as their stems secrete a fluid that promotes the wilting of other flowers. If you must combine them, soak them by themselves for as long as possible, then rinse them and add them to the arrangement last. [Learn more about keeping cut flowers fresh.](#)
- Note that contact with the sap of daffodils may irritate skin or aggravate skin allergies.



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PESTS/DISEASES

- Daffodils are both deer-resistant and rodent-proof, as these animals do not like the taste of the bulbs in the Narcissus family.
- Daffodils can also be toxic to pets, so make sure your animals don't munch on them.
- The most common problems include large narcissus bulb fly, bulb scale mites, narcissus nematode, slugs, narcissus basal rot, and other fungal infections and viruses.

WIT AND WISDOM

- Daffodils are a [March birth flower](#).
- Daffodils symbolize regard for someone. [See more flower meanings](#).

Here's some daffodil-themed prose to brighten your day:

"Daffodowndilly"

She wore her yellow sun-bonnet,

She wore her greenest gown;

She turned to the south wind

And curtsied up and down.

She turned to the sunlight

And shook her yellow head,

And whispered to her neighbor:

"Winter is dead."

—A.A. Milne, *When We Were Very Young*

Daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and

take

The winds of March with beauty.

—William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

–William Wordsworth, *I Wander'd Lonely
as a Cloud*

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Of Spring Weather:
Chillier, but daffodillier.
–*The 1991 Old Farmer's Almanac*

FLOWERS

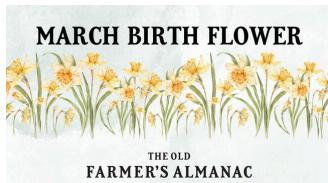
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Boeckmann



Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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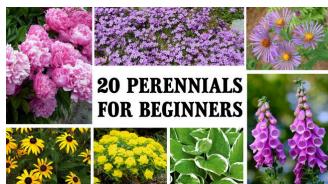
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COMMENTS

ADD A COMMENT

Beverly Stewart (not verified) 1 year 2

is our last cold night. Someone told me before I plant to soak the bulbs in water. I'm going to plant them this weekend in several areas. Some say sun, some say shade. I realize since I'm planting now I won't get any blooms this year. Is this correct? Please help me, I would love to plant.

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[REPLY](#)

The Editors 1 year 2 months ago

Hi, Beverly. As long as the bulbs are healthy and have been stored at above freezing temperatures, you can certainly plant them as soon as the ground in workable. You will likely get only leaves this year, but flowers should come along next year.

Good luck!

[REPLY](#)

Janet Ruddell (not verified) 2 years 1 month ago

are now white petal and light yellow middles.

Any idea what happened? Still beautiful and have 2 new bright yellow bunches this year but it's just amazing.

REPLY

Catherine Boeckmann 2 years 1

month ago

There are some daffodil varieties that change color as they mature. But you are talking about daffodils that changed after four years. Many daffodil colors will indeed fade after a few years, usually from a bright yellow to more white as the years go by.

REPLY

KAY (not verified) 2 years 1 month ago

Haven't planted any in long time although favorite because purchased and planted 3 bushels of King Alfred Daffodils only to have the squirrels dig them up and they

and pieces of bulbs strewn about everywhere.

Rodent resistant? I really don't believe so, but
sure wish it were true! :(

REPLY

georgis (not verified) 2 years 4 months ago

I've had daffs in my front gardens for 2 years.
This year I needed to drastically amend the
garden soil, so I dug up the bulbs in September
or October and put them in pots (outside). I fig-
ured that would keep them dormant until I was
ready to put them back into the ground. The
weather has been mild most of the fall, and ap-
parently they all decided it was spring already! I
have 3 smallish pots with a half dozen sprouts
each - help! what do I do with them now?

I don't want to put them back in the garden, it's
abruptly going to drop to freezing next week. I
suppose I could bring them in the house and let
them grow and bloom indoors, but I don't really
have a good place to put them. Other ideas?

REPLY

georgis (not verified) 2 years 3

months ago

Update: I put them on shelves in the garage, and a couple of weeks later they started really taking off. So I brought the silly things in to a countertop in the master bath. Ta-da!

They've started blooming already!

One pot is noticeably behind the other two, so I expect the overall display will last for quite a while. Once spring arrives OUTside I'll put them back in those gardens and hope they hibernate properly this time.

REPLY

Cameron Johnson (not verified) 2 years 11

months ago

My daffodils near my stone wall are being overtaken by broad leaf weeds. Since daffodils appear to be a monocot, is it safe to use a broad leaf weed killer on them to control broad leaf weeds?

Pat (not verified) 2 years 11 months ago

Last spring all the flower buds got hit with a frost, they turned brown and never did flower.

This year I have no buds, is it because of last years frost?

Thank you,

Pat

REPLY

Sandra (not verified) 3 years 2 months ago

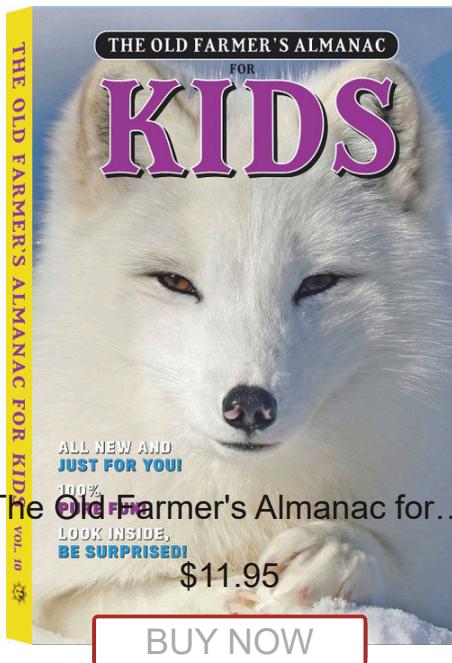
Can daffodils that have bloomed survive indoors? If so how is this accomplished?

Thank you for your time!

REPLY

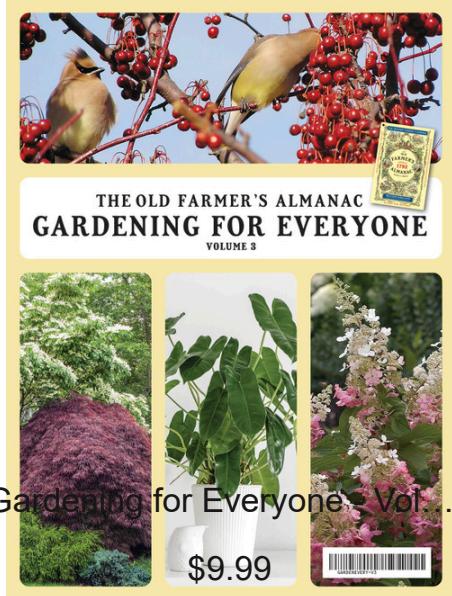
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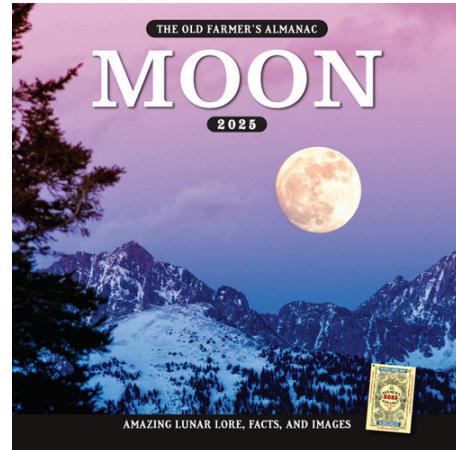

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