

## Plant Daffodils Now for a Burst of Spring Color

Daffodil? Narcissus? Both names are used interchangeably. The diversity of the genus *Narcissus* adds to the confusion. The name *narcissus* is derived from the genus name *Narcissus*. There are at least twenty-five species of *Narcissus* with over 13,000 hybrids and most are suitable for bed plantings. They are long lived but will not tolerate water-logged soil. They do like a fertile, well-drained soil, however. The flowers last longer in partial shade.

Daffodils are planted in the fall, six inches deep and six inches apart, range from six to twenty-four inches tall, and the flowers are extremely variable. Flowers may have one or several blooms to a stalk and may be one-half to five inches in diameter and colors range from yellow, white, pink, orange and orange-red or bicolor. The trumpet may be long and tubular or short and cuplike. Some flowers are fragrant. *Narcissus* may flower from early spring into spring depending on the cultivar. Shorter ones usually bloom first.

When purchasing bulbs, the bigger the bulb the more expense but the greater the flower show. *Narcissus* bulbs are sometimes double nosed (two bulbs together). Double bulbs may be pulled apart before planting.

When landscaping with narcissus and other spring bulbs, remember they generally look better in large masses of a single color or naturalized rather than in single rows. Spring bulbs work well planted into a perennial flower bed, ground cover area, rock garden or between shrubs. *Narcissus* also interplant well with other bulbs especially grape hyacinths, or crocus. Experiment with planting narcissus at the recommended depth then plant grape hyacinths right above them at four-inch depth. Add compost and fertilizer. Spring flowering bulbs generally need well drained soil and do best under deciduous trees. They will be short lived under evergreens.

Plant large bulbs such as daffodils at an eight-inch depth. Small bulbs are planted at 4 inches deep. The rule of thumb is to plant them at 2 to 3 times the height of the bulb. Plant point up. It is a good idea to map their location or place a colored golf tee above the bulb. Mulch at 3-4 inches and water thoroughly after planting. Daffodils are divided when the leaves mature. Many leaves and few flowers indicate a need for dividing.

