FPS423

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Narcissus spp. Daffodil, Narcissus[1]

Edward F. Gilman[2]

Introduction

The well-known daffodil is now available in single or double flower forms in various color combinations of yellow, white, apricot, cream, peach, red, or orange (Fig. 1). Long used in forced pot culture, daffodils make attractive naturalized ground covers in sweeping drifts or under trees. Daffodils also work well under shrubs, in rock gardens or near water, or used as an edging plant. Few plants seem to signify the freshness of spring quite as well as daffodils.

General Information

Scientific name: *Narcissus spp.*

Pronunciation: nar-SIS-suss species

Common name(s): daffodil, narcissus

Family: *Amaryllidaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous

USDA hardiness zones: 3B through 10 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Figure 1. Daffodil

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10: year round

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

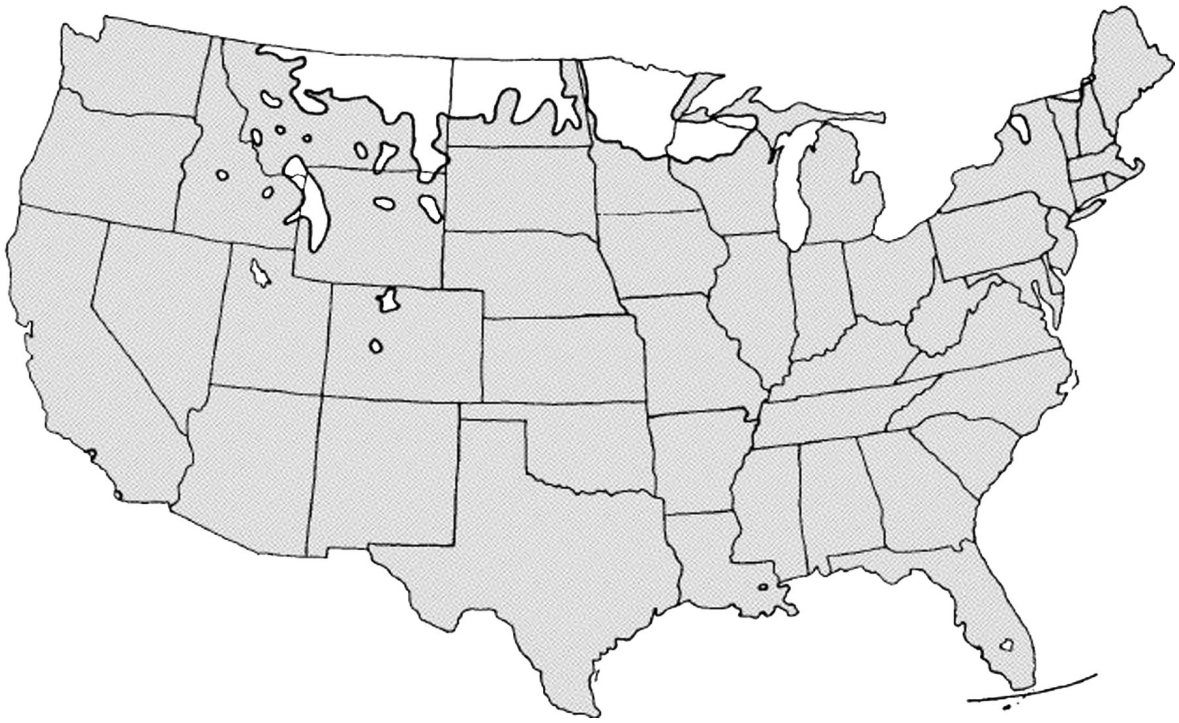

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; border; container or above-ground planter; edging; suitable for growing indoors

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Spread: .5 to 2 feet

Plant habit: upright

Plant density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire

Leaf shape: linear

Leaf venation: parallel

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 12 to 18 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white; yellow, cream; apricot; red; orange

Flower characteristic: spring flowering; pleasant fragrance; winter flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown

Fruit length: unknown

Fruit cover: unknown

Fruit color: green

Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable

Current year stem/twig color: not applicable

Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in part shade/part sun

Soil tolerances: occasionally wet; acidic; sand; loam; clay

Drought tolerance: high

Soil salt tolerances: poor

Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable

Winter interest: plant has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: not known to be invasive

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

Use and Management

Hundreds of cultivars exist today, and planting dates will vary accordingly, but the bulbs are usually planted in fall when the soil is cool. Although daffodils grow well in full sun or light shade, the flowers last longer in light shade. The bulbs are planted with four to five inches of soil on top of them. If spaced eight inches apart, the bulbs should not need to be divided for two to three years. Double-nosed bulbs are actually two blooming-sized bulbs joined together. When selecting a location for planting, it should be noted that the individual flowers will face the sun.

Bulbs should be watered well after planting and, in the south, thereafter if winters are dry. After flowering, plants should continue to be watered and fertilized. The foliage should be allowed to naturally turn yellow and die without being removed because it will help supply energy to the bulb for the next year's bloom. When flowering becomes sparse and the blooms small, division of the bulbs may be necessary. After the foliage has died down, dig and lift the bulbs, separating off only those bulbs which come off easily. Replant at once or store at 45-degrees F. for a very short period.

The tulip bulb aphid damages stored bulbs and feeds on the leaves and other above ground parts in the spring.

The bulb mite causes infested bulbs to produce stunted leaves and deformed flowers.

Bulb flies will infest narcissus. The larvae make the bulbs soft and unable to grow. The openings created by the insect are entrances for diseases.

Millipedes will feed on the undersides of bulbs.

The stem and bulb nematode causes darkened bulb scales, giving a ringed appearance to bulb cross sections. Yellowish pockets in the bulb contain many nematodes. Infested bulbs do not grow, or fail to flower. The shoots are abnormal and twisted. Remove infested plants and avoid rich wet soil with a high humus content.

Pests and Diseases

Blue mold is a storage problem and is worse on injured bulbs. The disease is most likely to occur in moist storage conditions.

Crown rot covers bulbs with layers of coarse, white mold. Remove infected plants and avoid infested soil for two to three years.

Basal rot causes a decay starting at the roots or bases of the scales, and spreads upwards inside the bulb. The plants are dwarfed and the blossoms abnormal.

Fire causes spotting and rotting of flowers in humid weather. The disease spreads to, and rapidly destroys, the leaves. The symptoms on leaves are dark reddish, elongated, brown spots. Rake up and destroy old foliage.

Leaf spot causes large spots or blotches on the leaves. The leaves wither and die. The bulbs lack nourishment due to the premature death of leaves. Remove and destroy plants with diseased foliage.

Smolder rots the foliage and flowers in cold, wet seasons. The leaves are stuck together when they emerge and infected bulbs rot in storage. Remove and destroy infected plants.

Root rot causes leaf yellowing and stunting and withering of plants. The roots have yellowish or brown discolored stripes and decayed regions. The bulbs remain sound. This disease is more of a problem where narcissi have been planted for several years.

Leaf scorch causes blighted leaf tips to be separated from healthy portions by a yellow area. The secondary infection on the lower leaves is minute, watersoaked or yellowish spots, which become raised, scabby and reddish. The flower stalks and flowers may be spotted.